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Vote theft rampant, BJP is winning by false means: Rahul

On a drive: Tejashwi Yadav is at the wheel as Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi waves at people in Sasaram on Sunday. AICC/PTI

Amit Bhelari
SASARAM

Vote theft is going on across the country, but Bihar voters will not allow this to happen in their State, Rahul Gandhi, senior Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, said as he began his 16-day "Voter Adhikar Yatra" from Sasaram in the poll-bound State on Sunday.

At a rally, Mr. Gandhi said the BJP had won elections through false means. "In Maharashtra, all the opinion polls were predicting that the INDIA bloc will form the government, but when the election results came, the BJP-led alliance formed the government. The BJP got the votes of one crore new voters by wrong means," he alleged.

"In the entire country, vote theft is going on in the name of special intensive revision (SIR); they want to add new voters and steal the votes," he said, asserting that the people of Bihar would not allow such vote theft.

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav asked Bihar voters to teach a lesson to those who wanted to steal votes. "The work which BJP cannot do on its own, it is now taking the help of the EC to remove the genuine voters from the draft rolls. The EC is cheating the people in the name of SIR. Attempts are not only being made to take away the voting rights, but to snatch your existence as well. But I promise that I will not allow them to do so," Mr. Yadav said.

He said Mr. Modi wanted to apply *choona* (lime) to the people of Bihar but he did not know that in the State, *choona* was used in *khaini* (chewing tobacco) and eaten by people after rubbing it.

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File affidavit in seven days or apologise: EC to Rahul Gandhi

Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar refuses Opposition's demand for machine-readable voter lists, CCTV footage of polling, citing privacy concerns; he says if complaints are not filed within 45 days of poll results, parties must file affidavits

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Sunday doubled down on its demand that the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, submit an affidavit stating his allegations of electoral roll manipulation in a Karnataka Assembly segment.

In his first press conference since assuming office, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar did not name the Congress leader, but asked him to submit the signed affidavit within seven days or apologise to the nation.

The CEC refused the Opposition's demands to publish a machine-readable voter list and to provide CCTV footage of the voting process, claiming that both measures would violate voter privacy.

> You (Rahul Gandhi) have to give an affidavit or apologise to the nation. If within seven days affidavit is not given, then it means allegations are wrong
>
> If accusations are made against 1,50,000 people, then should all these voters be given notices without any evidence?
>
> **GYANESH KUMAR**
> Chief Election Commissioner

Combative CEC

This comes 10 days after Mr. Gandhi alleged deliberate, large-scale discrepancies on the electoral rolls of the Mahadevapura Assembly segment of the Bangalore Central Lok Sabha constituency, which the BJP won in the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

Following his allegations, the Chief Electoral Officers of Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Haryana had asked him to submit them under oath, which he has refused to do.

Asked why the EC has not taken *suo motu* cognisance of the allegations, a combative CEC said: "If accusations are made against 1,50,000 people, then should all these voters be given notices without any evidence?"

"You have to give an affidavit or apologise to the nation. If within seven days, affidavit is not given, then it means allegations are wrong," he said.

'No discrimination'

However, Mr. Kumar did not reply to a question on why BJP MP Anurag Thakur – who has made similar allegations of electoral roll discrepancies in the Rae Bareli Lok Sabha constituency, which is represented by Mr. Gandhi – was not asked to submit an affidavit as well.

To another question on why a complaint filed by the Biju Janata Dal in Odisha about the Lok Sabha election had not been investigated, Mr. Kumar clarified that the complaint was not made under oath, adding that the 45-day limit for complaints had passed. He had a similar response to a complaint filed by Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav.

Mr. Kumar began the press conference by asserting that the EC could not discriminate between political parties, insisting that it considers ruling and Opposition parties equal.

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'DELETED NAMES ON SITE'
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NEARBY

BJP targets Siddaramaiah over SIT probe

MANGALURU
The Bharatiya Janata Party, whose members and legislators visited Dharmasthala to express solidarity with the temple and its authorities, targeted Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the Special Investigation Team probe into the alleged mass burial. » PAGE 6

Congress serves show-cause notice on MLA

BENGALURU
Once again cracking the whip on indiscipline, the Congress has issued a show-cause notice to its MLA for Channagiri, Shivaganga V. Basavaraj, asking him to respond for speaking about the Chief Minister's post despite the high command instructing partymen not to speculate over it in public. » PAGE 6

Cash for votes: Lahar Singh petitions ECI

BENGALURU
BJP Rajya Sabha member Lahar Singh Siroya has urged the Election Commission of India to investigate an audio clip allegedly featuring Congress MLA for Arsikere K.M. Shivalinge Gowda discussing cash distribution tovoters during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. » PAGE 6

Centre's GST reforms will benefit the poor and middle class: Modi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The proposed changes to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime will benefit the poor, middle class, traders, and entrepreneurs, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday.

"For us, reform signifies the advancement of good governance, which is why we place strong emphasis on continuous improvement," Mr. Modi said, while inaugurating two key highway projects in the National Capital Region – the Delhi section of the Dwarka Expressway and the Urban Extension Road-II. "As part of this vision, next-generation reforms will be introduced under the GST framework. This Diwali, these GST reforms will bring a double bonus to the people," he said.

Narendra Modi

"Every family, the poor and the middle class, small and big entrepreneurs, and every trader and businessman will benefit from this," he added.

The changes to the GST were first announced by Mr. Modi in his Independence Day address on Friday.

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C.P. Radhakrishnan is NDA's V-P candidate

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan was named the National Democratic Alliance's Vice-Presidential candidate on Sunday, after the BJP Parliamentary Board endorsed his name, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Mr. Radhakrishnan, 68, is a former MP from Coimbatore and former Tamil Nadu BJP chief. The party's national president and Union Minister, J.P. Nadda, made the announcement at a press conference after the Parliamentary Board meeting.

C. P. Radhakrishnan

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Prasidh emerges as the ideal foil to Siraj

Big tests lie immediately ahead of the Karnataka pacer, but the 29-year-old can expect a decent run in the next few years if he can build on his English gains

R. Kaushik

AP

THE GIST

- Despite playing only three of the five Tests in the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy, the aggressive Prasidh ended up with 14 wickets, the joint fourth highest across teams
- That Prasidh is a wicket-taking bowler is evidenced from 22 scalps from six Tests, all of them overseas — two in South Africa, one in Australia and now three in England
- Prasidh is the first to acknowledge the need to keep his economy under check. Three or four good deliveries in an over have invariably been offset by at least one four-ball

Harry Brook had thrown his hand away after a blistering 111, offering India just the slimmest of lifelines. Akash Deep, India's least effective and impressive pacer of the game, had provided the breakthrough; it was now up to his other two comrades to step up.

Twice in the preceding three years, including in Leeds this June, India had allowed England to chase down totals in excess of 370 with consummate ease. In Birmingham in 2022, Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow smashed centuries to muscle their side to a commanding seven-wicket win in the final match of a series that ended more than 12 months after it began. At Headingley in the first Test of the latest showdown, England sauntered untroubled to 371 for the loss of five wickets, Root again unconquered as he completed a demolition job started by Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett.

These two constituted England's two highest successful chases in Test history. Now, at The Oval, it appeared as if those two chases would bookend an assault on 374, the target Shubman Gill's side had set for the hosts to complete a 3-1 series victory.

India had done the early running through Mohammed Siraj, who plucked out Crawley's off-stump off the final ball of the third day and then pinged stand-in skipper Ollie Pope in front a little over 75 minutes into the fourth morning. Between these two strikes came a crucial blow, delivered by a towering 29-year-old who has been around the first-class circuit for a long time but was only playing his sixth Test.

In his second coming as a Test batter, in the Ben Stokes-Brendon McCullum management era, Duckett has emerged as an enterprising, fearless, uninhibited stroke-maker, the aggressor who takes on bowling attacks with surprising consistency, given the high risk associated with his batting. The little left-hander had a torrid time in his first run back in 2016 but reintegrated into the Test set-up in 2022, he has been a fabulous tone-setter for the Bazballing Englishmen.

At Headingley, Duckett had smashed 149 while dominating an opening stand of 188 with Crawley; at The Oval, he had eased to 54 and looked set for another big, defining hand when Prasidh Krishna decided to gatecrash his party. With a full ball that moved late, Prasidh defeated the booming Duckett cover-drive and found the outside edge expertly held at second slip by K.L. Rahul. It was a huge moment in the game, magnified an hour later by Siraj's dismissal of Pope. With England 106 for three, India felt this was its time.

It eventually was, of course, but Gill's boys took the scenic route to the finish line when a more mundane but less arduous path beckoned. Prasidh, the designated short-ball enforcer because he can fuse bounce with pace, extracted a false shot from Brook that flew to long-leg; Siraj held the catch but stepped on the rope in what for long threatened to be the turning point. Brook should have been dismissed for 19, England should have slumped further to 137 for four. What followed was carnage, with Brook laying into India with gusto and Root playing his customary unhurried hand, allowing the more boisterous younger man to do the running while he provided the calm and the assurance.

With every scything Brook stroke, the fight seemed to ooze out of the visitors. Their body language was as flat as the bowling and they merely went through the motions when, after a 195-run alliance with Root, Brook charged Akash and put up a catch to mid-off. Now 301 for four, England needed just 73 with six wickets (including an injured Chris Woakes who had dislocated his left shoulder on the opening day) in hand; India had to somehow prise out those six wickets if it was to come back from a series in which Gill's men more than held their own without anything to show for their perseverance.

Operating from one end, as if on autopilot as he went through one over after another without losing focus, accuracy, control or intensity, was Siraj, relishing the responsibility of being the lead bowler in Jasprit Bumrah's absence. But he couldn't do it all on his own. He needed support of the kind Akash had provided in Birmingham, though it was clear that this time around, that had to come from elsewhere, given how sub-par the Bengal pacer's display was. Elsewhere meant Prasidh, who had had a mixed series – plenty of wickets, sure, but also plenty of runs conceded in quick time.

India didn't have runs to play with in this instance. Prasidh knew this, England knew this, the thousands at the ground knew this, the millions watching on television knew this. But knowing is one thing, doing is quite another, right?

Heroic and extended burst

And therefore, in a heroic and extended burst split by rain and stumps on the fourth day, Prasidh turned in indisputably the most influential spell of his fledgling Test career. In the end, Siraj rightly walked away with most of the accolades for his tireless, unflagging commitment to the cause, but it needed the Hyderabadi's incandescence to shade Prasidh's endeavours. In a last spell of 8-1-19-3, the 29-year-old Prasidh was consistently threatening, mixing craft with intelligence to make the most of favourable overhead conditions, a Duke's ball that did the faster bowlers' bidding and an unusually tense and nervy England batting that bore no resemblance to the juggernaut it had been with Brook and Root were running amok.

Let's go back to the immediacy of the Brook dismissal, which brought Jacob Bethell, who will soon become the youngest man to lead England, to the middle. Bethell had made a half-century in the second innings of each of his three previous Tests, all in New Zealand in December, but this was different. This was pressure; the left-hander was playing his first game of the series, slotting in at the No. 6 position that Ben Stokes had made his own. He was jumpy, anxious, edgy; Siraj and even Akash gave him nothing to score off, so it was no surprise that when Prasidh came back for what became his final spell, Bethell optimistically charged the pacer and managed an inside-edge on to his middle-stump.

Perceptibly, the dynamics shifted and the pressure got to even Root, by now having brought up his 39th century and becoming Test cricket's second highest run-maker, behind Sachin Tendulkar. Prasidh, on a mission, produced a wobble-seam delivery that angled in, straightened and evoked a tentative prod from a man on 105 that took the edge on its way to the wicketkeeper. Prasidh roared, The Oval echoed with a collective roar of its own. India had the bit between its teeth; it would return the following morning for 56 dramatic minutes to seal a magnificent six-run win, Prasidh's final act an express full ball that accounted for Josh Tongue.

Despite playing only three of the five matches, the aggressive Prasidh ended up with 14 wickets, the joint fourth highest across teams, alongside Bumrah and behind only Siraj, Tongue and Stokes. His economy of 4.94 was easily the highest of all bowlers with more than two wickets but wait – Prasidh boasted a strike-rate of 45 (that's seven-and-a-half overs per wicket) which was topped only by Tongue (40.10) among bowlers from both sides that had played more than one Test.

Pause for a moment, and let that sink in. For all his profligacy, Prasidh took his wickets quicker than Siraj (48.39) and Bumrah, who needed 51.28 balls per success. If he is viewed as an attacking prospect in the short-to-mid-term, who can argue with that line of thought?

Prasidh is the first to acknowledge the need to keep his economy under check. It was a task he performed with aplomb in the climactic stages of the Oval Test, when he bowled fast and furious without losing his discipline, but he is aware that in the long run, he can't afford to leak boundaries by the bagful.

Three or four good deliveries in an over have invariably been offset by at least one four-ball, and while it's a worthy trade-off when the wickets keep coming, there is something to be said for the value of building pressure through dot balls and maiden overs, which are generally the bread-and-butter of fast bowling on batter-friendly pitches that are currently the norm in England, at the very least.

That he is a wicket-taking bowler is evidenced from 22 scalps from six Tests, all of them overseas – two in South Africa, one in Australia and now three in England. With a big question mark hanging over Bumrah's sustained availability and the likes of Akash and Mukesh Kumar struggling for both fitness and consistent penetration, Prasidh has emerged as the ideal foil to Siraj, now primed to take over as the fast-bowling spearhead for some time to come.

Prasidh's big tests lie immediately ahead of him, assuming he gets to play against the West Indies and South Africa at home in October and November respectively.

India is unlikely to go in with more than two quicks, at the most, and whether the Karnataka man figures in the XI will depend on Bumrah's status and whether the think-tank feels Siraj needs a break after his extraordinary exploits in England. It won't be lost on Prasidh that he will have only a bit part to play in India's backyard, where spin is likely to be the preferred mode of destruction despite the misadventure against New Zealand last year.

As such, he will need to be more on point, keeping an eye on his economy while providing the cutting edge with the new SG Test ball that he is more familiar with than the Kookaburra and the Duke's with which he has operated hitherto in the five-day game.

Seemingly having put his injury woes behind him, Prasidh can expect a decent run in the next few years if he can build on his English gains. He might be a late bloomer, but that's precisely what could work in his favour in an era where workload management has become such a misused phrase.

BBMP's fresh ad policy 'monopolistic', claim advertisers

Chetan B.C.
BENGALURU

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has begun auctioning advertisement rights after lifting a seven-year ban on hoardings in the city, with the aim of generating over ₹500 crore in revenue. However, local companies fear they may lose out to bidders from other States.

Last month, the Karnataka government introduced a new advertising policy, but the rules framed under it have left advertisers deeply dissatisfied. During the pre-bid meeting, attended by more than 60 companies, several concerns were raised, with many alleging that the system is designed to "favour" large firms.

A local advertiser who attended the meeting said the entire process of participating in the bid has been made unnecessarily cumbersome.

"The tenders were floated in the last week of July, and the last date to upload them is August 25. This leaves hardly any time to secure advertising rights and obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC)," the advertiser explained.

Fresh rights

The tender document requires bidders to obtain fresh rights, as the previous enrolment is seven years old, and to secure an NOC from the civic body's advertisement department.

Interestingly, advertisers believe that obtaining an NOC will be far easier for new entrants, especially those from outside Karnataka, as they do not have to submit a track record with the BBMP. This, they argue, gives outsiders a competitive edge. Advertisers fear that the new system will tilt the balance heavily in favour of large companies.

"As each zone will be awarded to a single company, only big players with deep pockets are likely to win the bids. This new policy clearly favours newcomers and big corporations, while smaller firms are left with no opportunities," another advertiser remarked.

As per the new policy, only eight companies will be granted advertising rights across the city. "This will not only create a monopoly for one company in each zone but will also strip property owners of their bargaining power," an advertiser said. The new rules also prohibit advertising on public spaces such as footpaths and trees, compelling advertisers to negotiate with private property owners for space.

Additionally, advertisers allege that the civic body has already entered into Public-Private Partnerships with companies managing advertisements on bus stands and billboards, which effectively reduces the available space for new bidders.

Despite the widespread criticism expressed during the pre-bid meeting, the BBMP remains firm on its plan to conduct the technical bid on August 27.

"The policy is modelled around Delhi's advertisement policy approved by the Supreme Court, while also keeping in mind the pollution and other environmental aspects," the officer said.

A file photo of Krishnaraja Sagar near Mysuru.

Orange alert issued for Kodagu district

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

After a prolonged break, monsoon is active in parts of south interior-Karnataka since the last few days and the India Meteorological Department has issued an orange alert for Kodagu valid till Monday.

Meanwhile, in view of heavy rains in the catchment areas of the Cauvery and its tributaries, the Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Limited (CNNL) has issued a flood warning for people living on the downstream of the Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) reservoir as the outflow from the dam will be increased to nearly 50,000 cusecs.

Rate of inflow

This is due to increase in the rate of inflow to the reservoir, according to CNNL which said that people living on both banks of the river and the low-lying area of river Cauvery should move to safer places and take precautionary measures for safety and security of their lives and property.

The reservoir level at the KRS was 124.46 ft against the maximum level of 124.80 ft at 8 a.m. on Sunday, according to Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC).

The gross storage capacity of the reservoir is 49.452 tmc ft against which the present storage is 48.977 tmc ft.

The locations with highest rainfall in the region during the last 24 hours included Begar gram panchayat in Chikkamagaluru district which received 204.5 mm of rains followed by Shanuvalli GP with 185 mm.

While the rains have gained fresh traction in the last few days, the period August 1 to 16 was on the deficit side.

However, the cumulative rainfall from June 1 to August 16 is under normal category and while Kodagu has received 1624 mm of rains, it is below normal for Chikkamagalur which has received 897 mm of rainfall and it is 21% below normal.

Other districts in the region including Hassan, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar fall under normal category, while Mandya district has received 204 mm and is under excess category.

Flexes omnipresent in city despite blanket ban

Officials admit the issue is more about competition than necessity; if one politician puts up 100 banners, rivals ensure 101 go up the next day

Chetan B.C.
BENGALURU

Religious sentiments, political rivalry, and weak laws continue to flood Bengaluru with flexes and banners despite a blanket ban, according to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and police.

In the past 16 months - in the fiscal year 2024-25 and till date - police have filed 461 FIRs against illegal advertisements, while BBMP has removed 27,207 flexes and collected ₹4.08 lakh in fine, data reviewed by *The Hindu* shows.

The Mahadevapura Zone tops the list with 113 FIRs under the Karnataka Open Places (Prevention of Disfigurement) Act, 1981, followed by the West Zone with 91, Yelahanka with 69, and the South Zone with 56.

Banned in 2018

The Karnataka High Court imposed a blanket ban on flexes in 2018. Since then, BBMP has been clearing them and booking offenders. Still, banners pop up during religious events and political occasions.

"Supporters of politicians often put these banners up overnight for birthdays or small events. When questioned, they ask us to first remove the banners of rival politicians," a BBMP official said.

Officials admit the issue is more about competition than necessity. If one politician puts up 100 banners, rivals ensure 101 go up the next day. Such contests are common in the East and West Zones, he said.

Religious programmes are another occasion when the streets are dotted with flex and banners. BBMP receives numerous requests every month for flex permissions. "We allow them out of respect for religious sentiments, warning organisers to remove them within hours of the event. But most don't comply, and our staff clears them later," said another officer. With limited manpower, BBMP struggles to match the pace at which banners appear overnight.

Last year, BBMP floated tenders twice to outsource flex removal, but no contractor applied. Officials attribute this to fear of politicians. The civic body is now banking on a project of affixing AI-equipped cameras on official vehicles to track banners in real time.

BBMP points out that politicians are justifying some banners as essential for awareness. For instance, the southern and southeastern parts of the city are dotted with banners about the e-khata drive, tied to poles and trees. The banners remain in place long after the event is over, and even though they technically qualify as advertisements, they are presented as "development awareness" flexes.

'Weak law'

Police said the weak law makes enforcement toothless. The law prescribes a fine of less than ₹2,000 and up to six months' imprisonment, but offenders easily secure bail.

"If someone installs 20 or 30 banners, the fine is the same as for one banner," said Deputy Commissioner of Police Akshay Hakay Machindra. "Since the banner itself costs more than the fine, they put up more without hesitation," he said, adding that police often join hands with BBMP to clear banners and sometimes take *suo motu* cases. "But they keep coming back," he said.

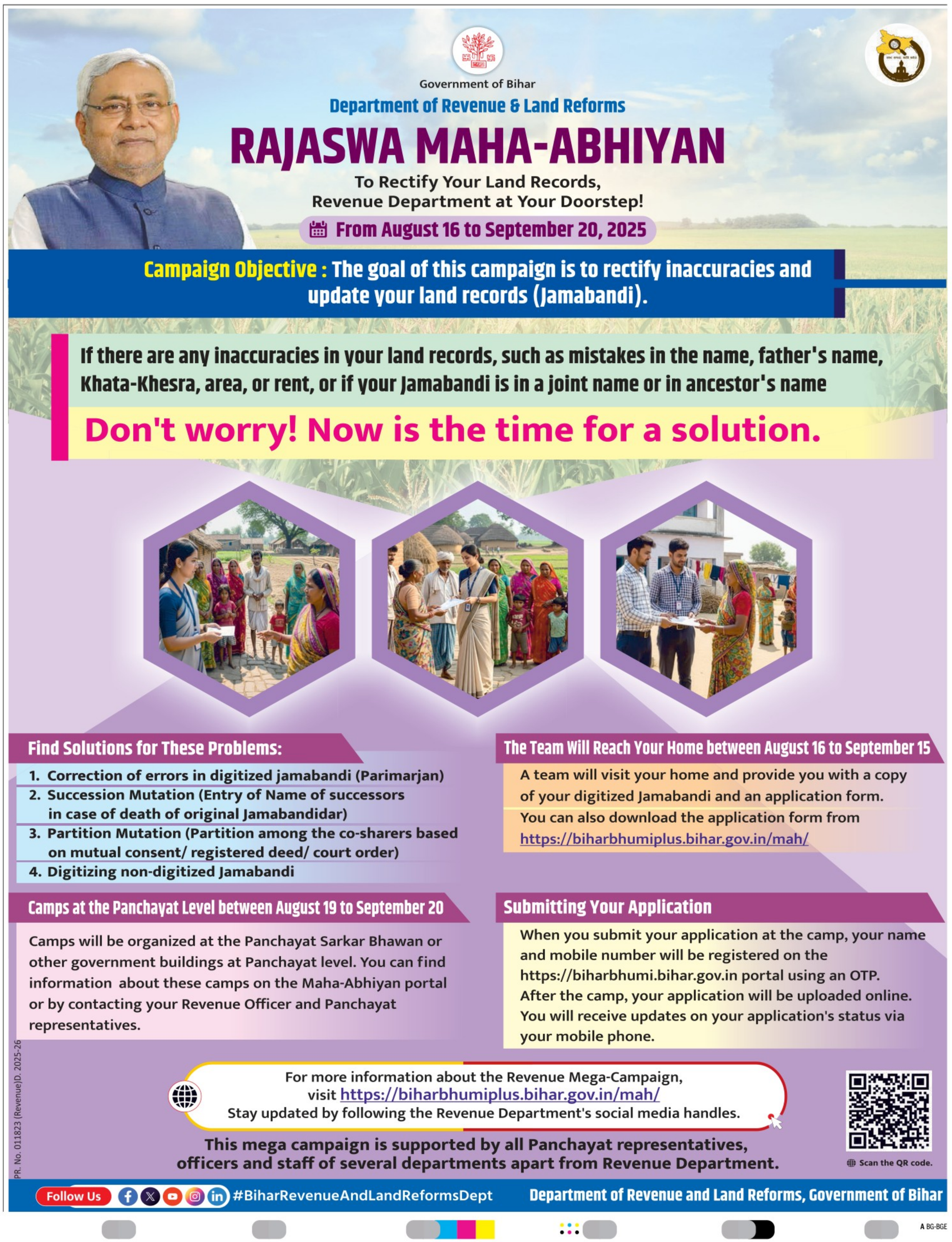
Amid these concerns, officials are pinning hopes on a writ petition regarding advertisements, currently in the High Court.

"If the court pulls up politicians and orders strict action, the city may finally see fewer illegal banners," a senior police officer said.

Action against illegal flexes between April 2024 and August 2025

Zone	Number of flexes/ banners removed	FIRs filed
East	1,466	40
West	746	91
South	3,658	56
Yelahanka	341	69
Mahadevapura	15,274	113
Bommanahalli	2,271	50
R.R. Nagar	1,555	23
Dasarahalli	1,896	19
Total	**27,207**	**461**

An eyesore: Flexes and banners at Uttarahalli Circle in Bengaluru. K. MURALI KUMAR


Government of Bihar
Department of Revenue & Land Reforms
RAJASWA MAHA-ABHIYAN
To Rectify Your Land Records,
Revenue Department at Your Doorstep!
From August 16 to September 20, 2025
Campaign Objective : The goal of this campaign is to rectify inaccuracies and update your land records (Jamabandi).
If there are any inaccuracies in your land records, such as mistakes in the name, father's name, Khata-Khesra, area, or rent, or if your Jamabandi is in a joint name or in ancestor's name
Don't worry! Now is the time for a solution.
Find Solutions for These Problems:
1. Correction of errors in digitized jamabandi (Parimarjan)
2. Succession Mutation (Entry of Name of successors in case of death of original Jamabandidar)
3. Partition Mutation (Partition among the co-sharers based on mutual consent/ registered deed/ court order)
4. Digitizing non-digitized Jamabandi
The Team Will Reach Your Home between August 16 to September 15
A team will visit your home and provide you with a copy of your digitized Jamabandi and an application form.
You can also download the application form from https://biharbhumiplus.bihar.gov.in/mah/
Camps at the Panchayat Level between August 19 to September 20
Camps will be organized at the Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan or other government buildings at Panchayat level. You can find information about these camps on the Maha-Abhiyan portal or by contacting your Revenue Officer and Panchayat representatives.
Submitting Your Application
When you submit your application at the camp, your name and mobile number will be registered on the https://biharbhumi.bihar.gov.in portal using an OTP.
After the camp, your application will be uploaded online.
You will receive updates on your application's status via your mobile phone.
For more information about the Revenue Mega-Campaign, visit https://biharbhumiplus.bihar.gov.in/mah/
Stay updated by following the Revenue Department's social media handles.
This mega campaign is supported by all Panchayat representatives, officers and staff of several departments apart from Revenue Department.
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Biodiversity everywhere is ordered by a common 'hidden' pattern

A new study has found that biodiversity is organised like an onion: with dense, unique biodiversity at the centre and grading outward towards porous, mixed margins; these findings could reveal insights into the basic forces that assemble nature's living mosaics and show conservationists where protection could have the biggest payoff

Hirra Azmat
Vasudevan Mukunth

A newly uncovered core rule turns the earth's messy quilt of species' ranges into something organised in layers. DAVIDVRAJU (CC BY-SA)

For almost two centuries, biologists have divided the earth into large biogeographical regions. Each region hosts a unique mix of species shaped by its own history, climate, and barriers, such as oceans and mountains. Because those histories differ, many scientists assumed the inner layout of species inside every region would be idiosyncratic – that South America's biodiversity, for example, would organise itself in a very different way from Africa's.

At the same time, global rules clearly exist. Tropical zones almost everywhere teem with life while polar zones host far fewer species. The authors of a new study wondered: could there also be a universal rule inside each biogeographical region, one that transcended continents, oceans, and even entire branches of the tree of life?

Answering that question could reveal the basic forces that assemble nature's living mosaics and show conservationists where protection could deliver the biggest payoff.

Peeling the onion

A new study, authored by scientists in Spain, Sweden, and the UK, reported just such a pattern in the July edition of *Nature Ecology & Evolution*.

According to University of Kashmir Department of Botany assistant professor Irfan Rashid, the study provides a rare, large-scale, data-backed confirmation of a general rule in biogeography.

In search of a hidden rule, the researchers cast an exceptionally wide net. They studied more than 30,000 species, including birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, rays, dragonflies, and trees. Information about the species' ranges came from global databases such as the IUCN Red List, BirdLife International, and US Forest inventories. The team also tiled the earth's surface into thousands of cells of equal area – each about 111 sq. km for most land animals, for example – and recorded all the species living there.

Then the researchers used a network analysis tool called Infomap to group those cells together whose species frequently co-occurred. Each cluster thus became a biogeographical region, and the species most tied to that region were tagged as characteristic, i.e. as belonging to its core community. Species that spilled over from neighbouring regions were called non-characteristic.

Finally, they took snapshots of four types of diversity in every cell: species richness (how many characteristic species live here), biota overlap (what fraction of species are non-chracteristic); occupancy (how widely do characteristic species range); and endemicity (how much of each characteristic species' range is confined to that region alone).

With these four numbers in hand, the researchers ran a clustering algorithm on all the cells. If biodiversity organised itself differently among different kinds of organisms, cells from birds would cluster apart from cells from mammals, and so on. If a common rule existed, however, the algorithm would lump cells from many different taxa together.

This is how the researchers were eventually able to split the world into seven repeating biogeographical sectors. More importantly, they found that the sectors appear again and again inside every major region and for every taxonomic group, lining up in a remarkably orderly pattern.

The core hotspots were highly rich, highly endemic, and had almost no foreign species. The next inner layers were still species-rich but had slightly more endemic species and slightly more widespread species. The middle layers had no richness and also had some non-characteristic species. Finally, the transition zones were species-poor and packed with wide-ranging generalists from multiple regions.

That is, biodiversity everywhere was organised like an onion: with dense, unique biodiversity at the centre and grading outward towards porous, mixed margins.

The researchers also found that in 98% of region–taxon combinations, temperature plus rainfall models could predict which sector a cell belonged to. This implied that only species that could tolerate the local conditions could survive in a given layer.

> The study provides a strong basis for understanding broad ecological trends
>
> **AMIT CHAWLA**
> PRINCIPAL SCIENTIST AT THE CSIR-INSTITUTE OF HIMALAYAN BIORESOURCE TECHNOLOGY (IHBT), PALAMPUR

Further, the species that inhabited the outer layers were also usually subsets, not replacements, of inner layer species. That is, moving outward from the core, there were fewer specialist species rather than entirely different specialised species.

"The study provides a strong basis for understanding broad ecological trends," Amit Chawla, Principal Scientist at the CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT) in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, said. "It shows how biodiversity tends to spread outward from regional hotspots, and how environmental filters like elevation or climate allow some species to move while blocking others."

Geographical gaps

In a time of climate uncertainty, understanding how species are spread can help make smarter decisions about what to protect and where. In the Indian Himalayas, for example, this could mean looking beyond traditional protected areas and focusing on key habitats, altitudinal zones, and natural corridors.

"We need to look at how changes in rainfall or temperature are affecting biodiversity along mountain slopes," Chawla said. "Small experiments that simulate these changes can give us important insights."

"The Himalayas are already experiencing rising temperatures and shifting rainfall and are at the frontlines of this change. Studies like this one offer a useful lens to understand the big picture," Asif Bashir Shikari, professor of genetics and plant breeding at the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, said.

Finally, Chawla did point out that while the study was global in scope, it had some geographical gaps. "For instance, groups like dragonflies in Eurasia and trees in North America were studied only in limited regions. The conclusions for these taxa could have been stronger with more comprehensive global datasets," he said.

He added that some biodiversity-rich regions in the tropics and Global South, including parts of India, were underrepresented for certain taxa, underscoring the need for region-specific research to complement these global findings.

In sum, the newly uncovered core-to-transition rule turns the earth's messy quilt of species' ranges into something organised in layers. By identifying how environmental filters shape these layers, the study could give conservationists a sharper lens through which to understand and protect the living planet.

(Hirra Azmat is a Kashmir-based journalist who writes on science, health, and environment. azmathirra@gmail.com, mukunth.v@thehindu.co.in)

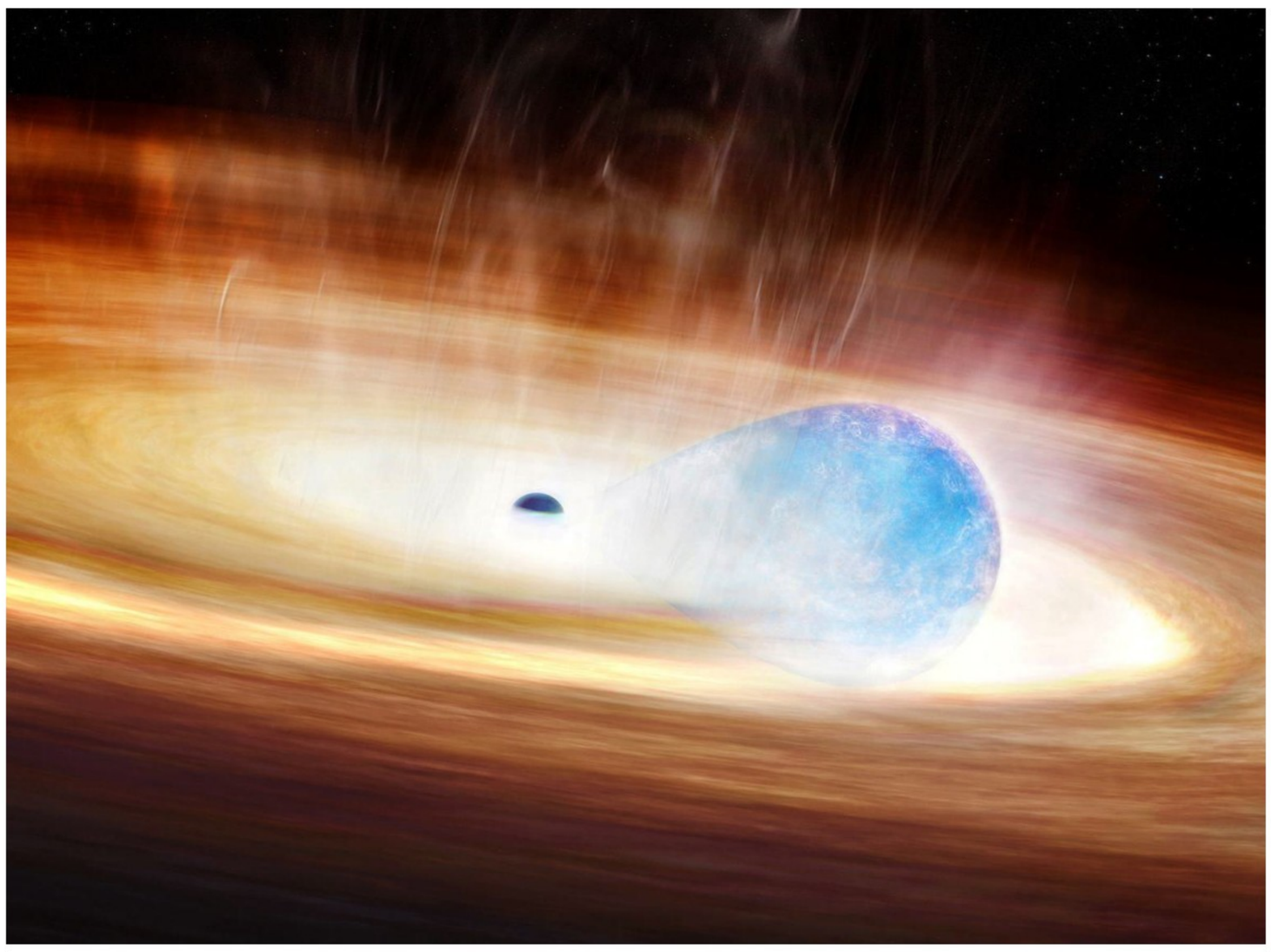
THE GIST

Researchers tiled the earth into cells and recorded the species there. Then a tool called Infomap grouped together those cells whose species co-occurred. Species were tagged as characteristic or non-characteristic. Finally, they took snapshots of four types of diversity in every cell

Researchers then ran a clustering algorithm on all the cells. If biodiversity organised itself differently among different organisms, cells from birds would cluster apart from mammals, and so on. Thus they split the world into seven sectors. The sectors appear repeatedly inside every major region and for every taxonomic group, lining up in an orderly pattern

It was found that temperature plus rainfall models could predict which sector a cell belonged to. This implies that only species that can tolerate local conditions can survive in a given layer. Moving outward from the core, there were fewer specialist species rather than entirely different species. The study shows that environmental filters allow some species to move while blocking others

BIG SHOT



Astronomers reported in *The Astrophysical Journal* on August 13, 2025, that they had found a new type of supernova that occurs when a black hole wins a gravitational tug-of-war against a giant star. The stars' final moments are depicted in this artist's illustration. REUTERS

WHAT IS IT?

Healthocide: war against healthcare

Vasudevan Mukunth

Israeli soldiers exit a tunnel underneath the European Hospital in the Gaza Strip on June 5, 2025. REUTERS

In an article published in the journal BMJ Global Health on August 5, researchers from the American University of Beirut in Lebanon coined a new word: healthocide. The authors wrote that the word captures a new, extreme pattern of violence against health systems that routine talk of "attacks on healthcare" does not capture. Instead, they continued, today's deliberate, large-scale destruction of whole health ecosystems in conflict zones such as Gaza needs to be called healthocide.

If the word is applied to recent wars, it could include a coordinated strategy to kill clinicians, bomb hospitals, block ambulances, and dismantle supply chains in order to erase a population's capacity for care. According to the authors, healthocide also frames these acts as being akin to genocide, i.e. the intentional destruction of a collective good essential to life and dignity, and thus demands stronger legal protections.

The authors also state that physicians and educators must document violations, push governments to enforce international humanitarian law, and to keep themselves from being complicit in healthocides.

In effect, by naming the phenomenon, the authors have sought to galvanise the medical community against the increasing weaponisation of healthcare.

Not all experts are convinced a new word is necessary. For example, Len Rubenstein, chair of the group Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, told NPR he doesn't think "it adds [to] what we already understand about the sanctity of health care and war." On the other hand, University of Greenwich global health expert Amal Elamin said the word "reinforces the fact that the targeted attacks on health care settings and health workers is no longer an isolated precedent."

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to
science@thehindu.co.in
with the subject 'Daily page'

Five held for slaughtering cattle

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Nelamangala Rural police have arrested a gang of five for slaughtering two cows and dumping the carcasses on Nelamangala-Aralasandra village Road, Kasaba hobli last week.

The accused used to sell the meat to buyers from Kerala. They bought cattle from Shivaji Nagar market and took it to a buyer at Nelamangala. However, the buyer rejected two of them because of their physical condition. Instead of taking them back, the accused allegedly slaughtered the two cows and dumped the carcasses on the roadside. The incident came to light when two police personnel who were on a patrol found the carcasses with the throats slit.

Based on the complaint, the police registered a case against unknown persons.

Two special teams tracked down the accused based on technical evidence.

70% of buildings in Bengaluru illegal: DKS

Shivakumar, who visited Nagarathpete where five people were killed in a fire on Saturday, orders audit of weak and illegal structures in the city

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday directed the officials of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to identify and serve notices on owners of the buildings that have been constructed unscientifically or have become structurally weak.

Mr. Shivakumar, who visited Nagarathpete where five people were killed in a fire on Saturday, expressed concerns over the conditions in which people were living in the locality and directed the officials to conduct an audit of illegal and weak structures in the city.

"Builders have raised eight to 10 floors in places that were meant for the construction of two or three floors. Many such structures are unfit for habitation," Mr. Shivakumar said. "Demolitions will follow later, but for now a detailed survey will be carried out. This cannot be finished in a day, and it may take years. Even in Delhi and Mumbai, similar problems persist," he said.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar inspecting the fire accident site at Nagarathpete in Bengaluru on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

He admitted that he was "alarmed" after stepping inside the damaged building. "If a fire breaks out in such cramped spaces, people rush to escape, leading to stampedes and inevitable deaths," he said.

Mr. Shivakumar said that nearly 70% of buildings in Bengaluru are technically illegal. "In new Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) layouts, builders have exceeded permissible limits. The Supreme Court has ruled that no water or electricity connections should be issued without occupancy certificates, which has led to four lakh connections being cut off," he said. "The issue of granting exemption for two-storey houses on 30x40 sites will be placed before the Cabinet," he noted. Asked about cramped localities like Chickpet and Nagarathpete, Mr. Shivakumar said that if they strictly applied fire safety rules, every building in these localities would have to be demolished. "Just two days earlier, a cylinder explosion in Adugodi had left one dead and several people injured. Now five lives have been lost in this fire. The root cause is the reckless construction of unsafe buildings," he said, adding that this cannot be allowed to continue.

While ruling out immediate large-scale demolitions, Mr. Shivakumar said that property owners would be asked to undertake repairs of weak buildings without delay. "If they fail, the government will intervene. In future, permission for such constructions will not be given," he said.

He announced that the government has sanctioned ₹5 lakh compensation for each families of the deceased in the Nagarathpete fire incident.

Building owners held

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The city police have arrested building owners in connection with the fire accident that killed five people, including a couple and their two minor children, in Nagarathpete on Saturday.

The police are trying to ascertain the details of the buildings, violations that have taken place, and lack of safety measures from the arrested building owners, who have been identified as Sandeep Shetty and Balakrishnaiah Shetty. A senior official said that almost every building in the narrow lane had violations at every stage and corrective measures were almost impossible, making the area a tinderbox and a fire safety risk.

Meanwhile, the Forensic Science Laboratory, Madiwala, and Bangalore Electricity Supply Company are yet to submit their report ascertaining the reason for the mishap. Though an electric short circuit was suspected to have triggered the fire, the technical report is awaited.

Music concert at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Annapurna Devi Foundation will present *'Smaraney'*, a two-day Hindustani classical music concert at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Race Course Road on August 23 and 24.

The performances will begin at 5 p.m. on both days.

KIA ranked most punctual 'large' airport in July with on-time performance of 92.35%

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has been ranked as the most punctual airport among large airports during July, 2025.

The KIA led the large airports category with an on-time performance (OTP) of 92.35%, according to aviation analytics firm Cirium's OTP monthly report airlines and airports, July 2025.

Third busiest airport

According to the report, the KIA served 105 routes with 38 airlines recorded an on-time departure of 92.35% and an on-time arrival of 86.10% during the month. The KIA, which is the third busiest airport in the country, handled a traffic of 21.9 million passengers in the first six months of 2025.

The second spot in the large airport category was occupied by the Chennai International Airport with an on-time departure of 87.35% and an on-time arrival of 82.39%. The Chennai airport served 66 routes with 38 airlines. Apart from KIA and the Chennai airport, three more Indian airports featured in the list of top 20 airports in the large category.

They are Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport occupying the fifth spot, Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport occupying the 10th spot, and Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport in the 14th spot. In the medium airports category, the Ahmedabad Airport occupied the fifth spot and in the small airports category, Srinagar's Sheikh ul-Alam International Airport and the Pune International Airport occupied the 11th and 16th spots respectively.

Every month, Cirium reviews the total number of flights in a given month (approximately three million) for every airport globally in an ordered list, then looks at where the percentile demarcations fall. The aviation analytics firm said that airports are selected based on a combination of factors like seats and actual gate departure coverage 90% or better. Large airports are ones with 25 to 40 million seats, medium airports with 15 to 25 million seats, and small airports with 5 to 15 million seats.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, AUG. 18		
RISE	06:08	SET 18:39
RISE	01:04	SET 14:33
TUESDAY, AUG. 19		
RISE	06:08	SET 18:38
RISE	02:05	SET 15:35
WEDNESDAY, AUG. 20		
RISE	06:08	SET 18:38
RISE	03:08	SET 16:31

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	28	24
Mysuru	27	20
Bengaluru	26	20

Bengaluru Today
27°C The weather will be comfortable. Night will be pleasant. Spell of light rain and thundershower to occur.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
28°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be comfortable. Mostly dry weather to prevail.

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THE HINDU
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GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
KARNATAKA STATE ROAD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Speed is not the priority: Follow the speed limits.

Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister

A 24-year-old son died in a road crash as he was speeding on his motorcycle. His wife also succumbed to death due to the unbearable grief of losing her only son. The man who lost his son and wife suggests everyone: "Even if it's a bit late, drive slowly and reach safely." Protect your family from road tragedies.

Overspeeding is a punishable offense under Section 183 of Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

Sri K Ramalinga Reddy
Hon'ble Minister for Transport & Muzrai at a departmental programme.

A momentary lapse can lead to a life changing trauma for you and your family. Drive responsibly and follow the speed limits.

Protecting public property and refraining from violence
A constitutional fundamental duty of every Indian

SLOW DOWN FOLLOW THE SPEED LIMIT

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Trains which are going to get additional stoppages across T.N.

38 As many as 38 trains running across Tamil Nadu will have additional stoppages from August 18, Union Minister L. Murugan said. Mr. Murugan said he received petitions demanding that express trains, superfast trains and passenger trains stop at additional railway stations in the State. PTI

Persons injured in Dahi Handi festivities in Mumbai, Thane

318 Two people have died and more than 300 have sustained injuries during the 'Dahi Handi' festival in Mumbai and Thane that drew large crowds of people, civic officials said on Sunday. Of the 318 persons injured in Mumbai, only 24 have been hospitalised. PTI

People evacuated as Turkish rescuers battle wildfire in Gallipoli

250 The fire began in the northwestern province of Canakkale, and spread quickly due to high winds in the hills near the town of Gelibolu, on the shores of the busy shipping strait. More than 250 people were evacuated overnight as the wildfire raged on. AFP

Demonstrators detained by Israeli police in protests

38 Thousands of Israelis took part in a nationwide strike on Sunday in support of the families of hostages held in Gaza, calling on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reach an agreement with Hamas to end the war and release the remaining captives. REUTERS

Total outflow by foreign portfolio investors in equities

1.16 In ₹ lakh crore. Foreign investors offloaded Indian equities worth nearly ₹21,000 crore in the first half of August, pressured by U.S.-India trade tensions, lacklustre first-quarter corporate earnings, and a weakening rupee. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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What has been the impact of ethanol blending?

How are petrol vehicle owners reacting to the E20 mandate? How environmentally friendly is India's dependence on sugarcane for ethanol? How has the U.S. reacted to India's booming ethanol economy? Why has the adoption of EVs in India been much slower compared to other large economies?

EXPLAINER

Kunal Shankar
S. Hariharan

The story so far:

E20 petrol, which contains 20% ethanol and is being sold by Indian oil refiners, has been much in the news lately. India has achieved its target to blend 20% ethanol per litre of fuel five years ahead of the target under the National Policy on Biofuels. Ethanol blending in India rose from just 1.5% in 2014 to 20% in 2025, backed by the government's strong fiscal incentives to the sugarcane industry. While the government says ethanol blending achieves a range of goals such as cutting greenhouse gas emissions, bolstering farmers' incomes and reducing India's oil import bill, its benefits to the environment require closer scrutiny.

How are vehicle owners reacting to this change?

Vehicles sold in India from 2023 come with E20 stickers, indicating compatibility with 20% ethanol blended petrol. Additionally, manufacturers have addressed the concerns of those who own older vehicles. Hero Motocrop says in its website, "The material composition such as rubbers, elastomers and plastic components that are directly exposed to fuel also need to be changed to E20 compatible materials."

However, according to LocalCircles, two in three petrol vehicle owners are against the E20 mandate. Only 12% of the 36,000 people surveyed across 315 districts are in favour of the switch. Critics cited a drop in mileage and increased maintenance costs. The survey urged the Union government to allow consumers to choose the type of fuel they want.

While the Centre admitted to a "marginal drop" in engine efficiency, it said this "can be further minimised through improved engine tuning and use of E20-compatible materials." Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has called the consumer angst a "vilification campaign" facilitated by "vested, economic interests". While the Union government attempts to defend its E20 policy, its own think tank, the NITI Aayog, has urged the government "to compensate the consumers for a drop in efficiency from ethanol blended fuels", by way of "tax incentives on E10 and E20 fuel".

According to the Minister, "since 2014-15 India has already saved more than ₹1.40 lakh crore in foreign exchange through petrol substitution." But has the benefit been passed to the end consumer?

An analysis by *The Hindu* showed that Coal India Ltd, Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL), and Gas Authority of India Ltd collectively contributed ₹1.27 lakh crore, or 42.3% of the total ₹3 lakh crore dividends the Union government received from non-banking Public Sector Undertaking (PSUs) between 2020-21 and 2024-25. IOC and BPCL together saw a 255% rise in their dividend payouts since 2022-23 and a 65% decrease in oil prices. However, the two PSUs only passed on a 2% decrease in petrol prices to the public.

What about the impact on agriculture?

Sugarcane-based ethanol supply has grown from 40 crore litres in FY14 to nearly 670 crore litres, derived from about 9% of total sugar output, in FY24. The Union government says it has paid "over ₹1.20 lakh crore to farmers" since FY15. But how environmentally friendly is India's dependence on sugarcane for ethanol?

New fuel: Farmers load freshly harvested sugarcane into a tractor trolley during the harvesting season, in Karad, Maharashtra, on December 15, 2024. PTI

About 60-70 tonnes of water is required to cultivate one tonne of sugarcane. Many sugarcane growing regions in India do not receive the 1,500 to 3,000 millimetre rainfall that is necessary for the crop's optimal growth. This leads to groundwater extraction and unsustainable irrigation methods. A 2023 Central Groundwater Board report says that sugarcane growing districts in Maharashtra extract more groundwater than nearby regions. Distress among sugarcane growers in that State has been widely reported. Unsustainable agriculture practices accelerate land degradation. The Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India 2021 found that almost 30% of India's land is degraded. The water intensive nature of sugarcane and the impact on ground water reserves at a time of extreme weather has been absent from the discussion on ethanol-blended petrol.

The Centre, however, says it is looking to diversify ethanol supplies. The Food Corporation of India's rice allocation for ethanol jumped to a record 5.2 million metric tonnes, which is about 3.6% of output, from less than 3,000 tonnes allocated last year. Similarly, in 2024-25, over 34% of corn output was diverted for ethanol production. This diversion forced India to import about 9.7 lakh tonnes of corn during 2024-25 – a six-fold increase over the previous year's 1.37 lakh tonnes.

Despite diversification efforts, area under sugarcane cultivation this year is estimated to be 57.24 lakh hectare against 57.11 lakh hectare last season. The assured payment mechanism for sugarcane, the Fair and Remunerative Pricing, is the key reason farmers bet on the crop as a source of stable income. While this rise is marginal, an analysis by the OECD-FAO says that 22% of India's sugarcane will be used for ethanol production by 2034.

India's booming ethanol economy has also come under the gaze of the U.S. The Trump administration is pushing India to relax restrictions to its ethanol imports. The 2025 National Trade Estimate report noted India's policy as a significant "trade barrier." Import relaxation could potentially undermine years of investment and capacity building in ethanol production. The Indian Sugar Mills Association has urged the government to maintain the restrictions.

Will it affect the transition to EVs?

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said the shift to ethanol-blended petrol "has helped India reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 700 lakh tonnes." Shifting to EVs, however, will achieve far higher rates of emissions reductions and speed up transport's decarbonisation, which is the third largest carbon emitting sector globally after energy and industry. The success of cities like Beijing in cutting air pollution is mainly due to the rapid adoption of EVs. Of course, this switch has to be backed by renewable energy rather than coal, to aid in decarbonising transport.

Adoption of EVs has been much slower in India when compared to other large economies like the U.S., the European Union and China. About 7.6% of vehicle sales in 2024 was electric. Sales of EVs have to increase by over 22% in the next five years to reach the government's own target of 30% by 2030.

Another challenge to wider EV adoption in India is its dependence on Rare Earth Elements (REE). According to the Ministry of Mines, before China's export curbs were imposed, only 2,270 tonnes of REEs and compounds of REEs were imported in 2023-24. But this relatively lower level is critical for the industry to sustain the current level of EV production. The production and processing of many REEs is geographically concentrated in China, making global supply vulnerable to several risks.

The automotive industry has also sounded alarm bells about the disruption in rare earth supply. India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki reduced its near-term production targets for its new EV, e-Vitara, attributing it to delays in receiving rare earth magnets. Other manufacturers too are bracing themselves for disruptions.

Crisil Ratings Senior Director Anuj Sethi has said, "The supply squeeze comes just as the auto sector is preparing for aggressive EV rollouts." The recent detente in bilateral relations with China might help the industry to address the crisis in the short term. The Union government is engaged in diplomacy with Beijing to address the rare earth supply crunch, mainly germanium.

Going forward, there is uncertainty on whether the Centre wants to push ahead with ethanol blending beyond 20%. While Minister Puri said the government will push for blending beyond 20%, the Union government in March said that there has been no decision yet.

To know more, please scan the link to watch The Hindu's video explainer newsth.live/ethanolblending

THE GIST

- Vehicles sold in India from 2023 come with E20 stickers, indicating compatibility with 20% ethanol blended petrol. Additionally, manufacturers have addressed the concerns of those who own older vehicles.
- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said the shift to ethanol-blended petrol "has helped India reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 700 lakh tonnes."
- India's booming ethanol economy has also come under the gaze of the U.S. The Trump administration is pushing India to relax restrictions to its ethanol imports.

The trains will follow the normal start schedule of 6.30 a.m. from Tuesday onwards.

Early trains on Namma Metro's Yellow Line today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Namma Metro has announced that the trains will operate from 5 a.m. on the Yellow Line on Monday.

According to a Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (BMRCL) statement on Sunday, the service is "in anticipation of a significant increase in passenger activity following the extended Independence Day weekend".

However, this is only for Monday, and the trains will follow the normal start schedule of 6.30 a.m. from Tuesday onwards, the statement said.

Marksheet scam in Gulbarga varsity causes a loss of ₹11.67 cr.

As per the rules of NEP, it is mandatory to issue digital marksheets to students who have completed their degrees, but the varsity has violated the govt. order and printed marksheets

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

A multi-crore marksheet scam has been reported in the Department of Evaluation of Gulbarga University, where marksheets were printed in violation of the government orders.

A committee headed by S.R. Niranjana, Vice-Chairman of Karnataka State Higher Education Council, has conducted a probe into the issue and submitted a report to the government stating that the university has suffered a loss of about ₹11.67 crore due to the printing of marksheets in violation of the rules.

Minister for Higher Education M.C. Sudhakar revealed this in response to a question raised by a member, Talwar Sabanna, in the Legislative Council.

The previous BJP government implemented National Education Policy (NEP-2020) in the higher education sector in 2021-22. As per the rules of NEP, instead of physical marksheets, it is mandatory to issue digital marksheets to students who have completed their degrees.

The report, in addition to the financial loss, has framed charges against 11 people, including the university's Registrar (Evaluation). FILE PHOTO

After the results of various examinations, the digital marksheets are uploaded in DigiLocker. Students can download these marksheets using their login credentials. But, Gulbarga University violated the government order and printed marksheets from 2021-22 to 2024-25. The university obtained these marksheets from the government press.

Since digital marksheets were mandatory, the university did not distribute these printed marksheets to any student. As a result, the marksheets of more than five lakh undergraduate and postgraduate courses had remained in the university godown.

The Syndicate members of the university had objected to the printing of marksheets in violation of the rules, after which the State government had formed a committee headed by Prof. Niranjana to investigate the issue.

The report, in addition to the financial loss caused due to the printing of mark sheets in violation of the rules, has also framed charges against 11 people, including the university's Registrar (Evaluation).

"The names of the officers/staff members who were there during that period, and their designations have been given. After examining the report, it has been found that Gulbarga University has illegally printed marksheets and degree certificates in violation of the orders issued by the State government, causing financial loss. Legal action will be taken against the officers/employees under the Karnataka State Universities Act, 2000," said Dr. Sudhakar.

KDA chairman demands early implementation of SEP

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

Kannada Development Authority (KDA) Chairman Prof. Purushottam Bilimale has demanded that the State government implement the new proposed State Education Policy (SEP) at the earliest.

In a letter written to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and concerned education ministers of the state, he said that the SEP Commission had given a "very comprehensive" education policy, in a first-of-its-kind exercise. "If the report is implemented properly, the state's education sector will change radically over the next decade," he said.

Further, he stated that several studies have confirmed that the three-language formula forcibly imposes Hindi and does not help improve the cognitive and academic ability of students. "In this context, the SEP report, which has recommended a two-language policy with Kannada and English for the State, is a very timely step," Prof. Bilimale said.

Purushottam Bilimale

"It is important to note that the commission had not ignored non-Kannada and non-English languages while recommending a two-language policy. The report states that Kannada and English languages will remain mandatory as the first or second language, and that interested students will be allowed to learn their mother tongue as a third language," he explained, adding that this was much needed in "today's complex linguistic environment".

'Model EP'

"The recommendations of the SEP are mainly based on the Constitution of India, the Kannada Language Comprehensive Development Act, 2022, The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, The Kannada Language Learning Act, 2015 and all aspects of the National Education Policy 1968, 1986, 1992 and 2020, among other policies and laws. This is a constitutionally sound policy and can serve as a model education policy for the country," he said, demanding its early implementation.

Environmentalists oppose Sharavati project, urge govt. to drop it

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Environmentalists gathered in Shivamogga on Sunday to adopt a resolution opposing the Sharavati Pumped Storage Project (PSP), which proposed to generate 2,000 MW of power by spending over ₹10,200 crore.

Many environmentalists attended a public meeting jointly organised by the committee opposing the Sharavati Pumped Storage Project, Paryavaran Trust, and Rashtriya Swabhiman Andolana in Shivamogga. The participants stated that the Karnataka Power Corporation Limited has already damaged vast tracts of the Western Ghats. Any further more efforts to damage the biodiversity hotspot would not be tolerated, they said. Instead of the pumped-storage project, the government should consider advanced technologies like battery power storage systems and smart grids, they added.

The environmentalists urged the State government to drop the project considering the damage it could cause to the Western Ghats. Environmentalists like B.M. Kumaraswamy, Akhilesh Chipli, and Anant Hegde Ashisara participated in a day-long discussion on burning issues, including the controversial pumped storage project.

Police register *suo motu* case against poachers

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Anekal police have registered a *suo motu* case against poachers, and a search has been launched to track them down.

Residents of Haldenahalli village, on the outskirts of Anekal, woke up in the wee hours of Sunday, hearing gunshots being fired at around 3 a.m. on Sunday. Based on the information, the police verified footage from CCTV cameras in the area, which showed a gang of four men wearing headlamps and carrying single-barrel guns. It was suspected that it was a local gang and went on a hunt for rabbits, deer, or wild boars.

A *suo motu* case has been registered under Section 325 (mischief by killing or maiming animal) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and the Indian Arms Act, 1959.

I-Day celebrated

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

State Bank of India celebrated the 79th Independence Day on August 15 at the Local Head Office on St. Mark's Road.

The event featured the National Anthem and State Anthem, followed by patriotic songs, skits, and other cultural performances by staff and retirees. Joohi Smita Sinha, chief general manager of SBI, Bengaluru Circle, addressed the gathering.

THE HINDU

EDUCATIONPLUS

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Promise or pitfall?

While the idea of foreign universities setting up campuses in India may sound progressive, it comes with serious concerns.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

P. John J. Kennedy
S.P. Mishra

India's higher education sector has grown remarkably, boasting 1,168 registered universities and 45,473 colleges serving millions of students. Despite this expansive network, the government's move to allow foreign universities to establish campuses in India raises some concerns.

Studying abroad

Each year, eight to 10 lakh Indian students choose to pursue higher education abroad, even as over 4.33 crore students enroll in institutions within India. However, the decision to study overseas isn't driven by academic quality alone. Many of those who can afford the high costs often see international education as a worthwhile investment. What they're really seeking is not just a degree but the experience of living in a new culture, building global networks, and gaining professional exposure, which cannot be replicated by foreign campuses located within India.

Career prospects also play a significant role. Many students believe they stand a better chance of securing high-paying jobs in developed economies after graduation. In fact, education often becomes a stepping stone toward long-term goals like permanent residency in or citizenship of countries such as the U.S., U.K., Canada, or Australia, which attract students with their stronger economies, higher salaries, and robust career opportunities. While foreign universities operating in India may offer excellent academic programmes, they could fall short of delivering these broader, more aspirational benefits.

Challenges

The idea of global institutions setting up campuses in India may sound progressive or even visionary, but it comes with several serious concerns that deserve closer examination.

A pressing issue is the potential financial drain without corresponding benefits to the local education ecosystem. Foreign universities will likely repatriate profits to their home countries instead of reinvesting in India. In contrast, domestic institutions typically use their earnings for faculty development, fund research, and upgrade infrastructure. This means foreign campuses could create a steady outflow of resources that benefits their countries of origin more than India's education sector.

Another major concern is the limited alignment of these campuses with the real aspirations of Indian students. Indian students seek overseas education for immigration benefits, international job markets, and cultural exposure. Without these incentives, their appeal remains limited.

There's also the risk of competitive displacement. India already boasts an extensive higher education network. Bringing in established global institutions could marginalise smaller or less-known Indian universities. The brand power of foreign universities might attract the best students and faculty, leaving local institutions to struggle for relevance and resources.

Cost is another major factor. Global universities tend to operate on a high-cost model, charging tuition fees far above what most Indian institutions ask for. If they follow a similar pricing strategy here, access will likely be limited to affluent students, creating an elitist and exclusionary education system. Such a model goes against the broader national goal of inclusive and equitable education for all.

Further, the long-term benefits of foreign campuses remain unproven. India already enables international education collaborations through IITs, IIMs, and other premier institutions. The effectiveness of standalone foreign campuses in significantly improving education standards remains uncertain, making the policy a risky experiment.

Alternatives

Given these concerns, India would do well to consider alternative strategies that enhance its higher education sector while maintaining economic and academic autonomy.

A more sustainable approach would begin with strengthening Indian universities themselves. This means increasing funding, expanding research opportunities, and investing in faculty development so that domestic institutions can offer globally competitive education without depending on foreign players.

Another promising strategy involves encouraging global collaborations within Indian campuses. Joint research projects, faculty exchange programmes, and integrated curricula can bring international standards and perspectives into Indian classrooms without leading to large-scale financial outflows. Technology also offers an effective and affordable pathway to global exposure. Virtual exchange programmes, international webinars, and global faculty lectures could offer students exposure to world-class education at lower costs, making international learning more accessible.

Finally, if the objective is to facilitate global education, increasing scholarships for Indian students seeking international opportunities would be a more effective and targeted approach.

The focus should be on strengthening Indian institutions, fostering international collaborations, and expanding global exposure more effectively. For now, this policy seems like a miscalculated opportunity rather than a strategic advancement for India's higher education ecosystem.

(Views expressed are personal)

P. John J. Kennedy is former Professor and Dean, Christ University, Bengaluru.
S.P. Mishra is Founder, India Career Centre, Hyderabad.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Aspire Scholarship
An initiative of SWAYAM Charitable Trust
Eligibility: First year B.Tech students at specified institutions with annual family income not exceeding ₹600,000.
Rewards: Scholarship for academic and related expenses for four years
Application: Online
Deadline: August 31
www.b4s.in/edge/ASPI4

Corteva Agriscience Scholarship
An initiative of Corteva Agriscience
Eligibility: Female students doing UG, PG or doctoral courses in agriculture and allied streams whose annual family income does not exceed ₹600,000.
Rewards: Variable depending on course
Application: Online
Deadline: August 31
www.b4s.in/edge/CASP5

HDFC Bank Parivartan's ECSS Programme
An initiative from HDFC Bank
Eligibility: Indian nationals who are school students (Classes 1 to 12) or in college (UG and PG courses) or doing a diploma or ITI/Polytechnic programme who have got at least 55% in the last qualifying exam and have an annual family income not exceeding ₹250,000.
Priority will be given to those who have faced personal/ family crises in the last three years that has impacted their ability to continue their education
Rewards: Up to ₹ 75,000
Application: Online
Deadline: September 4
www.b4s.in/edge/HDFC57

Courtesy: Buddy4study.com

TVS Indus Design Honours

The TVS Motor Company has launched the 'TVS Indus' Design Honours, an annual challenge to nurture design talent and redefine the future of mobility by tapping into blend India's rich design heritage. Participants must propose mobility concepts spanning mono-wheel, two-wheeler, and three-wheeler formats, while incorporating environmental, social, and cultural relevance.
Eligibility: Design students (UG or PG) and non-design students between 14 and 20 years.
Deadline:
October 6.
For more details about the challenge and how to enter, visit www.tvsindus.com

FULL CONTEXT

Cruel intentions: Villagers gather in large numbers in front of the residence of caste killing victim C. Kavin Selvaganesh in Arumugamangalam in Thoothukudi district on August 1. RAJESH. N

How 'honour' killings in India are reinforced and legitimised

States like Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Kerala — where Dalit communities have seen relatively greater empowerment — record higher rates of inter-caste marriages. Ironically, these are also the States with increased incidents of honour killings

Sivabalan Elangovan

Caste in India is not an individual problem – it is a deeply rooted social phenomenon. Caste survives and thrives not just because individuals insist on it, but because families, communities, and entire social structures continue to enforce and legitimise it, knowingly or otherwise.

At the heart of this caste endurance lie social customs passed down and protected within households. Children grow up internalising boundaries – who to talk to, who to marry, who to avoid – long before they can even articulate why. As a result, the caste system remains one of the most resilient social frameworks in India.

'Honour' killings

One of the biggest threats to the rigidity of caste has been social justice interventions. When marginalised communities, particularly Dalits, gain access to quality education and secure meaningful employment, it opens the gates for their integration into mainstream society. With that, a foundational shift begins. No longer confined to the margins, the oppressed now begin to interact with caste-Hindu society on an equal footing – in workplaces, colleges, cities, and most importantly, in relationships. This has created a new frontier of social tension: romantic unions that cross caste lines, especially those involving Dalit men and dominant caste women. These unions represent not just love or rebellion but a direct challenge to centuries-old caste hierarchies. And for many conservative families, that challenge is intolerable.

States like Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Kerala – where Dalit communities have seen relatively greater empowerment – also record higher rates of inter-caste marriages. According to the India Human Development Survey (IHDS-II), the national rate of inter-caste marriages stands at around 5%, but States with empowered Dalit populations show higher numbers. Ironically, these are also the States with increased incidents of honour killings.

This paradox reveals a disturbing truth: honour killings occur not where casteism is strongest, but where it is most threatened. In States where the oppressed still maintain their "status quo," violence is less – not because casteism is absent, but because it remains unchallenged. Thus, caste-based violence is not a sign of persistent hierarchy alone, but of hierarchy under siege.

Tamil Nadu's caste paradox

When caste killings happen, democratic voices among the public are strong in Tamil Nadu as the State boasts a strong and vibrant civil society. At the same time, caste is glorified on social media. Due to the anonymity such platforms offer, some accounts go so far as to defend caste killings.

How do we understand this paradox? Perhaps in Tamil Nadu, while people possess a collective consciousness against casteism, shaped by decades of social justice politics, individual attitudes may not always align in the same way. The State's anti-caste culture is collectively progressive but individually conflicted. In public, caste violence is rejected but in private conversations, WhatsApp groups, and through anonymous posts, caste continues to dictate social preferences, marriage alliances, and "honourable behaviour."

This paradox does not mean that Tamil Nadu's anti-caste movement is a failure. It means that one is living in a liminal space – between tradition and transformation. What we see on social media is not just caste pride, it's also the fear of losing inherited power and the anxiety of cultural change.

On family and caste

There's a popular belief that the caste system survives mainly because of political parties or caste-based organisations. While these certainly reinforce caste divisions in the public sphere, they are not the roots of the system. Caste survives because it is protected and transmitted within the family. Through everyday customs, rituals, marriage arrangements, social expectations, and inherited prejudices, caste becomes part of a child's consciousness long before they can question it. This is why caste has remained transgenerational, even in the face of rising education, urbanisation and exposure to new ideas.

However, the psychological and cultural importance of the 'family' itself is changing, especially among adolescents. Around the world, particularly in countries like South Korea and Japan, we are seeing dramatic shifts: marriage rates are falling, fertility rates are at historic lows, and the traditional family unit is losing its central place in people's lives. Instead, new models of relationship – open partnerships, cohabitation, single living, and self-parenting – are emerging.

India's urban youth are slowly reflecting this trend too. Many adolescents today are increasingly prioritising individual growth, emotional well-being, and autonomy over traditional family obligations. As the value of the family unit weakens, so too does the primary mechanism through which caste is enforced and reproduced.

In other words, if the family becomes less central in shaping relationships and social norms, caste may lose its strongest and oldest vehicle of survival. This doesn't mean that caste will disappear overnight. But it suggests that the cultural infrastructure that sustains it is slowly being dismantled – not by revolution, but by changing lifestyles, shifting emotional priorities, and evolution of the self.

Caste in India is at crossroads. On one hand, we see violent reactions and online glorification. On the other, we witness strong democratic voices against honour killings and a new generation slowly withdrawing from social values. Tamil Nadu symbolises this contradiction in its most vivid form – a State where both the loudest resistance to casteism and the quietest internal caste pride coexist. But it also offers hope: if this contradiction is acknowledged, addressed, and challenged, especially through engagement and digital counter-narratives, we may finally move toward a society where caste loses its grip not only on our systems, but on our hearts and minds.

Sivabalan Elangovan is Professor and Head, Dept of Psychiatry, Dr MGR Educational and Research Institute.

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

I fear the talks have reached an impasse

It is a pity he won't be coming back to live here. The house will soon fall into a state of disrepair

S. Upendran

"The new chap we've hired leaves home at 6:45 to be in time for work. He makes use of different transportations to get here. First,..."

"Not transportations. You have..."

"He takes the train, bus and...."

"I understand, but you cannot say 'transportations'. Transportation is an uncountable noun. The plural is 'transportation' and not 'transportations'."

"I see. So, if someone uses a bus, an auto and a train to get to..."

"Then, you talk about the different modes of transportation the person uses. For example, Jai uses several modes of transportation to get to office. What mode of transportation do you use?"

"My scooter."

"In the past, when we went to my father's village, we had to use several modes of transportation. Including a bullock cart."

"Those were the days! By the way, how do you pronounce i...m...p...a...s...s...e?"

"There are several ways of pronouncing the word. One way is...."

"What's the simplest way?"

"The Americans pronounce the 'i' in the first syllable like the 'i' in 'hit', 'bit' and 'kit', and the 'a' in the second, like the 'a' in 'ant' and 'apple'. They pronounce the word im-PASS with the stress on the second syllable. Do you know what impasse means?"

"Doesn't it mean dead end?"

"Very good! When you say that your discussions have reached an impasse, you're suggesting you have reached a dead end. No progress can be made because the two of you don't agree on anything."

"It's a deadlock. There's no point in discussing the matter further because no progress is possible."

"That's right! It's a stalemate. Here's an example. The rest of the world was stunned when the two countries found a way to end their impasse."

"If we are to overcome this impasse, we both need to be willing to make certain concessions."

"That's a good example."

"Anyway, what's happening with your idea of buying an independent house? Are you making any progress?"

"Not really! I'm seriously considering dropping the idea."

"But why? I heard that you saw a couple of houses. What happened?"

"I saw three, actually! They were all pretty old, and in a state of disrepair."

"Disrepair? You mean 'repair', don't you? Does the word 'disrepair' exist?"

"There's a big difference between 'repair' and 'disrepair'. When you say that the monument has fallen into disrepair, what you mean is that the monument is in bad shape."

"The building probably looks shabby – with the paint peeling off, the walls crumbling, the roof leaking, and the..."

"Stop, stop! You get the picture."

upendrankye@gmail.com

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Every culture and civilisation, particularly the polytheistic, had its own representation for the gods of medicine and healing. How well do you know your medical myths?

Ramya Kannan

QUESTION 1

The son of the god Apollo, he was believed to have the power to raise the dead and was revered by healers in Ancient Greece. The staff he held in his hand, is still relevant today in medicine and gives you a big clue about his name. Who was this?

QUESTION 2

In south Indian Hindu folk cultures, a goddess incarnated from Parvati, is believed to protect children from the pox. In the north, she is known as Shitala. Who are we talking about?

QUESTION 3

In Japanese myth, Sukunabikona or the god of healing is also credited with inventing a popular drink. What was the drink?

QUESTION 4

Roman myth boasts of a goddess who could specifically protect people from fever and malaria. In fact, the word fever derives from her name. Who is this?

QUESTION 5

In Egyptian mythology, _____ , a fierce goddess, could unleash her messengers to cause plagues upon populations. Naturally enough, she also receives prayers to ward off sickness and diseases. Fill in the blanks.

Visual question:
While Dhanvantri is believed to be the physician of the gods, and the god of Ayurveda, the Rig Veda associated the twins seen in the picture with medicine, health, sciences, and interestingly, the twilight. What is the name of the pair?

Questions and Answers to the August 15 edition of the daily quiz: 1. The Bretton Woods system created two major institutions: the IMF and the _____. **Ans: IBRD**
2. The system encouraged countries to depend on the US dollar as the central reserve currency. Name the national currency that the dollar succeeded in this capacity. **Ans: Pound sterling**
3. French president Georges Pompidou sent this warship to New York to bring France's gold holdings at the Federal Reserve Bank back. **Ans: Colbert (aka Suffren)**
4. On August 15, 1971, President Richard Nixon cancelled the ability of the U.S. dollar to be converted to gold. The collective name of the effects of this measure. **Ans: Nixon shock**
5. Name the agreement that officially rewrote the IMF's rules. **Ans: Jamaica Accords**
Visual: Name this English economist who proposed a supranational currency called 'bancor' in the early 1940s. **Ans: John Maynard Keynes**
Early Birds: Nobody got all the correct answers

Word of the day

Dovish:
opposed to war

Synonym: pacifist

Usage: *He proposed a dovish policy.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/dovishpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈdʌvɪʃ/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

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A BG-BGE

‘CM should apologise for allowing smear campaign against temple’

Karnataka BJP president urges the State government to reveal the details of the ‘conspiracy’ to tarnish the reputation of the Dharmasthala Manjunatha temple and its administrators as stated by Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

The Bharatiya Janata Party, whose members and legislators visited Dharmasthala to express solidarity with the temple and its authorities, targeted Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the Special Investigation Team probe into the alleged mass burials in the pilgrimage centre and demanded an apology from him for his alleged failure to prevent a “smear campaign” and “slander” against the Dharmasthala Manjunatha temple and its administrators using the probe.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the temple on Sunday, BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra demanded such an apology and urged the State government to reveal the details of the “conspiracy” behind the case to tarnish the reputation of the temple and its administrators as stated by Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar.

BJP leaders B.Y. Vijayendra, D. Vedavyasa Kamath, C.T. Ravi, and Capt. Brijesh Chowta at Dharmasthala Manjunatha temple on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Stating that the BJP is not indulging in any politics over the Dharmasthala matter, Mr. Vijayendra said that by indulging in the “smear campaign” using social media there is a conspiracy to create confusion in the minds of devotees over the temple and its administrators.

He said that Minister in charge of Dakshina Kannada Dinesh Gundu Rao, who is also the Minister for Health and Family Welfare, went on record a few days ago that the government ordered the SIT probe bowing to the pressure by the Leftist groups. In addition, Mr. Shivakumar has said that there is a conspiracy behind the case.

Vijayendra has said there is a plot to create confusion in the minds of devotees about the temple and its administrators

The government should have controlled the “smear campaign” and slander against the temple during the case but it did not and so the Chief Minister should apologise, Mr. Vijayendra said.

‘Appropriate occasion’

Mr. Vijayendra said that Mr. Shivakumar has stated that the details of the conspiracy will be revealed at an appropriate occasion. “When will that occasion arise? How long should the smear campaign and slander against the temple and its administrators continue?,” he asked.

The government should conduct an inquiry to find out the forces behind the “smear campaign” and slander, the BJP State president said.

Mr. Vijayendra said that the Deputy Chief Minister told the Legislative Assembly last week that he was an ardent devotee of Dharmasthala Manjunatha temple. “If so, he should reveal who are all behind the conspiracy,” Mr. Vijayendra added.

C.T. Ravi, MLC, said that the government should conduct an inquiry against those who indulged in slander and “smear campaign” against pattadhikari of Shree Kshetra Dharmasthala D. Veerendra Heggade and the temple.

All the BJP leaders Mr. Heggade, who is also a Rajya Sabha Member, and expressed their solidarity with the temple to prevent the “smear campaign” and slander against the temple.

Of them, S.R. Vishwanath, MLA for Yelahanka, led a rally of about 400 four-wheelers from Nelamangala to Dharmasthala on Saturday to express solidarity with the temple.

Congress serves show-cause notice on MLA over leadership change remarks

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Once again cracking the whip on indiscipline that would also serve as a warning for others, the Congress has issued a show-cause notice to its MLA for Channagiri, Shivaganga V. Basavaraj, asking him to respond for speaking about the Chief Minister’s post despite the high command instructing partymen not to speculate over it in public.

The notice comes in the light of his repeated utterances in public over Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar taking over the reins from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Mr. Basavaraj, a follower of Mr. Shivakumar and a first-time legislator from Channgiri in Davangere district, has been making statements on leadership change often.

Recently, he claimed that by December, Mr. Shivakumar could become Chief Minister.

The action against him comes close on the heels of the sacking of Cooperation

Shivaganga V. Basavaraj
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Minister, K.N. Rajanna, a close follower of Mr. Siddaramaiah, from the Cabinet a few days ago allegedly for his statements on leadership, party matters, and his recent remarks on “vote theft”, indicating that the party was responsible for it, embarrassing party leader Rahul Gandhi, who has taken up a campaign against “vote theft”.

The actions against leaders from both camps is believed to be a warning for others not to make public statements on party’s internal matters.

The disciplinary committee of the KPCC, headed by former Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, K. Rahman Khan, issued the notice on Sunday and asked Mr. Basavaraj to reply within seven days.

“Your repeated statements in public as reported by media have not only caused embarrassment to the party, but have also created confusion. These public statements amount to indiscipline. The KPCC disciplinary committee has taken a serious note of the indiscipline and decided to issue a show-cause notice seeking your explanation within seven days of this notice reaching you,” the notice signed by Mr. Nivedith Alva, committee office-bearer, said.

Recently, Ramanagara Congress MLA Iqbal Hussain, a known follower of Mr. Shivakumar and who had repeatedly spoken about leadership change in the State, was served a show-cause notice by the party.

The public postures by legislators and senior leaders of the ruling party, aligned with Mr. Siddaramaiah and Mr. Shivakumar, are being seen as firing salvos at each other on behalf of their leaders over the leadership change.

Dharmasthala: Writers, activists slam remarks by Ministers and BJP

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A group of senior writers and activists from the State, under the banner of Jagruta Nagareekaru - Karnataka, have condemned statements by multiple Ministers in the Congress government and the Bharatiya Janata Party regarding the ongoing probe into alleged burials at Dharmasthala.

‘Serious allegations’

“The whistleblower has made serious allegations and the State government has formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe these claims, which we welcome. But it is distressing to see statements made by the Deputy Chief Minister, the Home Minister, and Women and Child Development Minister, which seems to be attacking the morale of the SIT,” the writers said in a statement that was released on Sunday.

They further condemned the BJP rally at Dharmasthala on Sunday. “The BJP that did nothing

K. Marulasiddappa

to probe allegations that were there earlier (when it was in power), are now trying to obstruct a probe into the same and that raises suspicions. The BJP is emotionally provoking people by misleading them that the probe is targeting Dharmasthala, a pilgrimage centre, while the probe is against people who committed these alleged crimes,” the statement said.

The signatories include K. Marulasiddappa, G. Ramakrishna, and Vijaya among others.

Congress workers plan car rally to Dharmasthala

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After a delegation of BJP leaders, it will be the turn of Congress workers to visit Dharmasthala to show solidarity with the deity and pattadhikari D. Veerendra Heggade.

Congress workers and leaders will be taking out a car rally from Nelamangala to Dharmasthala after the ongoing Monsoon Session, Congress MLA for Neelamangala N. Srinivas told reporters on Sunday.

He said that there is a spread of misinformation and malicious campaign.

Mr. Srinivas said that the alleged vilification of the place and deity has insulted lakhs of devotees across the State.

Meanwhile, Laxman Savadi, MLA and Congress leader, has suspected that there could be a conspiracy behind the attempts at exhuming bodies to defame Dharmasthala.

He told reporters in Athani of Belagavi district on Sunday that there could be a bigger force behind the masked man.

‘SIT officials will decide whether to continue the probe or not’

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Seeking that the alleged mass burial issue in Dharmasthala should not be politicised, Home Minister G. Parameshwara has said that Special Investigation Team (SIT) officials will decide on whether to continue the probe or not.

Speaking to reporters here on Sunday, the Home Minister said that the Dharmasthala issue is one of law and justice with a complaint being filed, and the police who have taken up the case will probe it.

“If any evidence is found, a chargesheet will be filed in court. The SIT has to be given time to probe the complaint to know the truth instead of bringing in an religious angle to it or politicising it.”

Stating that the government has not issued any specific direction to the SIT, he said that SIT officials will decide on whether to submit an interim probe report.

The Home Minister said that no one, including the Chief Minister, is intervening in the matter. Reacting to Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar’s allegations that there could be a conspiracy, Dr. Parameshwara said that the issue should not be politicised, and one can imagine the consequences of such politicisation.

G. Parameshwara

Meanwhile, responding to presspersons’ queries in Bengaluru, Mr. Shivakumar described the BJP’s campaign-cum-rally in Dharmasthala as “political yatra and not a religious yatra”. He argued that Dharmasthala was a property of the general public and not a private property of the BJP.

Shivakumar sailing in two boats: Joshi

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar seems to be sailing in two boats on the issue of Dharmasthala burials case, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Sunday.

“On the one hand, Mr. Shivakumar suspects conspiracy behind the whole issue, while on the other hand, he blames the BJP for the protest against digging in Dharmasthala. This ambivalence is not easily understood,” he told reporters in Varur near Hubballi.

He has made a comment saying that Dharmasthala is not the BJP’s private property. “Should we keep quiet when Hindu holy places are under attack?” he said.

He said that he strongly suspected that there is a conspiracy to take over the Dharmasthala temple by the State government. “There is reason to believe that there is such a conspiracy. That is because the Congress government has tried to take over the wealth of Hindu temples in the past,” he said.

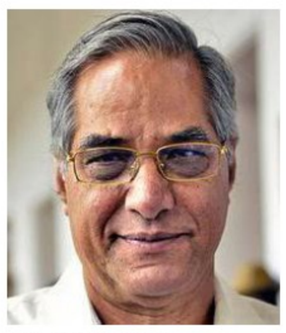
Cash for votes: Lahar Singh petitions ECI on audio clip

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

BJP Rajya Sabha member Lahar Singh Siroya has urged the Election Commission of India (ECI) to investigate an audio clip allegedly featuring Congress MLA for Arsikere K.M. Shivalinge Gowda discussing cash distribution to voters during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Citing his earlier complaint on former Union Minister C.M. Ibrahim’s admission of buying 3,000 votes to ensure Chief Minister Siddaramaiah’s victory in the 2018 Assembly elections from Badami, Mr. Lahar Singh said: “These repeated revelations expose the Congress’ deep-rooted *vote chori* culture, even as its leader Rahul Gandhi accuses others of electoral malpractice.”

“Now, there is another audio making news in my State (I have not independently verified the authenticity of the audio). In this clip, Mr. Gowda is heard speaking, apparently to a Congress Rajya Sabha MP,



Lahar Singh Siroya

on how much money should be distributed per voter in the Hassan Lok Sabha seat to ensure their candidate’s victory. This was in connection with the 2024 Lok Sabha polls,” he said.

Taking a dig at Mr. Rahul Gandhi, he said: “The irony is that Mr. Rahul Gandhi is shouting *vote chori* unaware that his own partymen are masters in the game. The fact that Mr. Rahul Gandhi makes wild allegations without worrying about what his party and partymen are all about is proof that he is desperately trying to remain relevant in the Indian political landscape.”

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Of conspiracy theories and facts

The allegations of mass burials in Dharmasthala and the State government’s decision to order a Special Investigation Team probe into the matter sparked conspiracy theories. The BJP, which was not too pleased by the decision of the Congress government to order the probe, suspected a conspiracy to malign the Sri Manjunatha temple at Dharmasthala and its hereditary administrator D. Veerendra Heggade. The allegations of conspiracy are growing louder after the authorities could not find skeletal remains on the scale of mass burials as alleged, even after digging several sites.

Three weeks ago, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R. Ashok *(pictured)*, while speaking to reporters in Mysuru, had claimed that the complainant was a Muslim. But, inquiries with sources familiar with the investigation had sought to clarify that the complainant was not a Muslim, but a Hindu from the Scheduled Castes community.

Separating facts from conspiracy theories in a public discourse is proving to be proving to be a challenge for the general public.

Where does the buck stop?

Accusing the Congress government of being an “abettor” in the stampede that claimed 11 lives during RCB’s victory celebrations in Bengaluru on June 4, BJP MLA and former Minister S. Suresh Kumar told Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, and others from shifting the blame onto their subordinate authorities.

Stating that the U.S. presidential office has an inscription that says “The buck stops here”, indicating that the President is the final authority and public responsibility, Mr. Suresh Kumar sought to remind the leaders that they are the supreme authorities in the government and that the onus was on them to take responsibility for the stampede as the “buck would stop with them.” Incidentally, “The buck stops here” was a phrase popularised by U.S. President Harry S. Truman, who kept a sign with that phrase on his desk in the Oval Office.

United in grief

It is often seen that death brings people together, even when they are on two sides of the political divide. The last rites of Kumara Chandrashekharanatha Swami, the seer of the Kengeri Vishwa Vokkaliga Maha Samsthana Mutt, who passed away on Saturday, was one such occasion.

When former Prime Minister and JD(S) supremo H.D. Deve Gowda, who is believed to be a close supporter of the mutt, arrived to pay his last respects, just about everyone rushed to help him. Mr. Gowda, at 92, now needs support to walk. Among those who rushed to his aid was Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar, also a Vokkaliga leader.

Laiqh A. Khan
B.S. Satish Kumar

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

HOMAGE

RESPECTFUL HOMAGE
To Immortal Humanitarian
PUNYASMARANE : 18-08-2025

Late Sri C.M. NAGARAJ
BORN : 09-03-1942 | EXPIRED : 18-08-2008
FOUNDER CHAIRMAN, EAST WEST INSTITUTIONS
FORMER MAYOR, B.B.M.P.
A GREAT LEADER, PIONEER, VISIONARY,
EDUCATIONALIST, PHILANTHROPIST & INSPIRER.
We earnestly pray God to rest his soul in peace.
Family Members, Management, Principals, Staff Members,
Students, Relatives & Friends.

A BG-BGE

Minister for Transport and Muzrai Ramalinga Reddy distributing cloth bags at Dodda Ganapathi Temple in Bengaluru on Sunday.
K. MURALI KUMAR

Let EC respond on voter list fraud row, says Suresh Gopi

Union Minister breaks silence on Opposition allegation that he and his family had shifted their votes to Thrissur using a false affidavit; Congress says charges will be proven in an investigation

The Hindu Bureau
THRISSUR

Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Thrissur MP Suresh Gopi said here on Sunday that it was the Election Commission, and not him, that should respond to allegations of voter list manipulation in the Lok Sabha election in 2024 in Thrissur.

He commented for the first time on the raging controversy while speaking to presspersons after garlanding the statue of Sakthan Thampuran, a ruler of the kingdom of Cochin in the 18th century.

"It is the Chief Election Commissioner who should answer your doubts. Why didn't I respond? Because it is not my responsibility. I am a Minister, and I have fulfilled my duties. Those who must reply will reply. If you have more questions, ask them – or wait until the matter comes before the Supreme Court," he said.

In a sharp remark aimed at his critics, he added: "A few monkeys have jumped out raising allegations. Go and ask them instead."

About garlanding Sakthan Thampuran's statue, Mr. Gopi said, "I heard what my heart speaks. I did what I felt was right. Thrissur must regain the strength of Sakthan."

The controversy erupted after allegations that Mr. Gopi and his family had shifted their votes to Thrissur using a false affidavit ahead of the Lok Sabha election. The City Police Commissioner has ordered an investigation. Documents have surfaced showing that the Minister's brother held votes in both Thrissur and Kollam, intensifying the row.

> Why didn't I respond? Because it is not my responsibility. I am a Minister, and I have fulfilled my duties.
>
> **SURESH GOPI,** Thrissur MP

> Such remarks are unbecoming of a people's representative. In fact, through his words, Mr. Gopi has shown that he is unfit to represent Thrissur
>
> **T. N. PRATHAPAN,** KPCC member

'An insult to people'

Thrissur District Congress Committee president Joseph Tajet hit back at Mr. Gopi, saying that his remarks were nothing but "an insult to the people of Thrissur".

"Those words ["the monkey comments"] were spoken while looking at the mirror. His first response after so many days of silence has sadly been to humiliate the very people of Thrissur whom he represents," Mr. Tajet said.

He accused Mr. Gopi of resorting to abusive language after being exposed.

"What he said reflects his culture, not ours. We cannot stoop to that level in our response. We raised genuine concerns about the irregularities on the voter list carried out by him and the Bharatiya Janata Party. As the MP for Thrissur, he should give an answer to these allegations directly. Passing the buck to the Election Commission or the Supreme Court only confirms the charges against him," Mr. Tajet added.

The DCC chief demanded that the Minister come clean before the people of Thrissur and admit to the "manipulations" on the voter list done ahead of the Lok Sabha election.

'Can't escape charges'

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) Political Affairs Committee member and former MP T.N. Prathapan said Mr. Gopi should not think he could escape the criminal charges by taking cover behind the Election Commission. "This is not a case of a family shifting residence and updating their voter ID. In the past two elections, Mr. Gopi's vote was registered in Thiruvananthapuram. But this time, he and his family became part of a criminal conspiracy to add nearly 75,000 fake votes in Thrissur," he alleged.

"If he is genuinely a resident of Thrissur, his name and that of his family should figure on the voter list for the upcoming Thrissur Corporation polls. Instead, their votes remain in Thiruvananthapuram, which makes it clear that their entries in Thrissur were made using forged documents. This will be proven in the police investigation," Mr. Prathapan said.

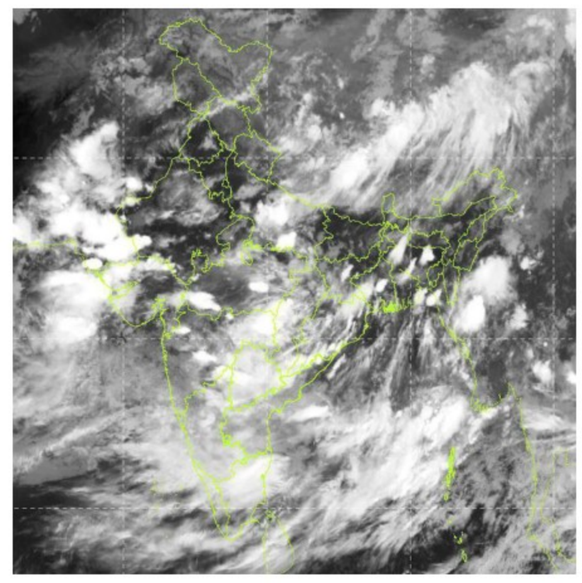
He added that instead of answering these questions, the Minister was trying to insult those who spoke the truth.

"Such remarks are unbecoming of a people's representative. In fact, through his words, Mr. Gopi has shown that he is unfit to represent Thrissur," Mr. Prathapan stated in a press release.

Mr. Gopi won the Thrissur Lok Sabha seat with a majority of 74,686 votes in the 2024 election, becoming the first BJP Lok Sabha member from Kerala. He was defeated in the 2019 general election and the 2021 Assembly election in Thrissur.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rain likely at isolated places over Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Uttarakhand

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	3.0	33.0	26.9	Kozhikode	26.0	28.5	23.8
Ahmedabad	35.0	29.6	25.7	Kurnool	5.0	30.5	24.1
Aizawl	12.0	29.6	21.9	Lucknow	—	35.5	28.5
Allahabad	—	35.7	27.8	Madurai	0.1	38.0	26.5
Bengaluru	1.2	26.4	20.1	Mangaluru	44.8	27.6	23.4
Bhopal	—	30.4	23.0	Mumbai	84.0	26.3	24.0
Bhubaneswar	22.0	32.0	25.1	Mysuru	00.0	00.0	00.0
Chandigarh	—	33.5	26.4	New Delhi	1.0	34.5	25.6
Chennai	15.0	34.2	25.9	Patna	—	35.1	29.8
Coimbatore	0.1	31.2	22.4	Port Blair	89.0	27.2	23.0
Dehradun	27.0	31.6	23.4	Puducherry	0.2	32.0	25.7
Gangtok	31.0	26.3	18.3	Pune	3.0	26.6	21.8
Goa	0.8	30.0	25.3	Raipur	16.0	31.7	24.7
Guwahati	30.0	36.5	24.1	Ranchi	0.4	30.2	22.6
Hubballi	—	24.0	22.0	Shillong	14.0	27.0	17.2
Hyderabad	0.1	26.0	21.7	Shimla	1.0	21.8	18.2
Imphal	7.0	32.2	23.0	Srinagar	—	32.5	20.9
Jaipur	—	33.3	27.2	Thiruvananthapuram	21.0	30.5	23.4
Kochi	26.0	27.4	23.6	Tiruchi	—	33.9	26.6
Kohima	80.0	23.8	18.9	Vijayawada	—	—	—
Kolkata	—	35.0	26.0	Visakhapatnam	55.0	32.1	25.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	8	30	67	1	38	
Bengaluru	6	21	—	30	65	
Chennai	2	15	—	42	86	
Delhi	7	12	39	160	147	
Hyderabad	19	17	18	128	96	
Kolkata	4	137	14	35	31	
Lucknow	9	36	39	29	76	
Mumbai	2	27	84	16	29	
Pune	—	23	74	26	37	
Visakhapatnam	8	40	25	39	49	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Gurugram, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 255 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 10

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Temples directed to impose fine on those using plastic items: Karnataka Minister

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

From August 15, the use of all kinds of plastic has been banned in temples under Muzrai Department, says Ramalinga Reddy

With the State government banning the use of plastic on the premises of temples coming under the Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Department from August 15, a plastic ban awareness programme was organised by the department on Sunday.

Inaugurating the event at Dodda Ganapathi Temple in Basavanagudi, Transport and Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy said that from August 15, the use of all kinds of plastic had been banned in temples under the department.

PMU constituted

"To ensure compliance, a project management unit (PMU) has been constituted. In the first phase, 25 temples have been identified for the installation of solid and liquid waste management units, with experts engaged to oversee scientific waste disposal," Mr. Reddy said.

The Minister further added that temple authorities have been directed to impose fines on those using plastic items. "This is aimed at ensuring environmental cleanliness," Mr. Reddy said. Earlier, while announcing the order, the Minister had said that it would be implemented in 34,505 temples.

Inscription in Sanskrit dating back to Vijayanagar period discovered

The Hindu Bureau
PUTTAPARTHI

An inscription written in Sanskrit on a pillar has been discovered at the Sri Venugopala Swamy Temple in Mereddipalli of Gorantla mandal in Sri Sathya Sai district, according to historian MyNaa Swamy.

Speaking to reporters at Gorantla on Sunday, he said that the inscription, reading "Sri Gopalakrishnaya Namaha Sri," was unearthed on a pillar in the "Mukha Mandapam" of the shrine. The single-line inscription highlights the importance of the temple, which dates back to the early Vijayanagar period of 14th Century, the historian added. "Four pillars adorned with sculptures are located in the "Mukha Mandapam", which stands in front of the sanctum sanctorum built for the revered Venugopala Swamy. The first pillar on the left features a sculpture of Narasimha Swamy, and below it, Sri Mahavishnu is depicted holding a conch and wheel, offering protection to devotees. The inscription is located between the sculptures of Narasimha and Vishnu and is written in the Nandi Nagari script. This inscription may belong to either Devaraya I or Devaraya II of the Sangama dynasty," MyNaa Swamy said.

The historian also pointed out that an inscription of Bukka Raya II, dating back to 1388 CE, records the construction of the Mereddipalli tank and the excavation of a water supply canal.

This Telugu inscription is presently lying neglected in the fields of Karavulapalli Subhash and deteriorating due to exposure to sun and rain.

An inscription written in Sanskrit discovered at Venugopala Swamy Temple in Mereddipalli of Sri Sathya Sai district.

Naidu to attend NDA's V-P nomination meet in Delhi

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is leaving for New Delhi on Monday to attend the NDA leaders' meeting scheduled to be held on August 20.

He will be taking part in the nomination programme of the NDA's Vice-Presidential candidate. During the visit, Mr. Naidu is expected to meet several Union Ministers, according to an official statement. Meanwhile, IT Minister Nara Lokesh is scheduled to meet various Union Ministers for discussions on key pending projects, in the national capital today.

N. Chandrababu Naidu

He will seek faster clearances for pending projects and discuss some new initiatives planned in the State. A press release said that Mr. Lokesh met Union Ministers on multiple occasions, and has been actively pursuing the State's interests since the formation of the coalition government last year.

It was mentioned that Mr. Lokesh's efforts helped in bringing new projects to the State, and ensured quicker approvals from the Centre.

Two more diagnosed with brain infection

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

Two more persons – a three-month-old child and a 40-year-old man – in Kozhikode district of Kerala have been diagnosed with primary amoebic meningoencephalitis. Sources said they are undergoing treatment at the Government Medical College Hospital, Kozhikode.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given and brought to the notice of the general public that, our client has negotiated and decided to purchase the Schedule Property from the respective owners. All persons having any claim against or to the Schedule Property or any part thereof by way of inheritance, mortgage, sale, conveyance, MOU, Agreement to Sell, G.P.A, transfer, lease deed, tenancy, license, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, exchange, possession, adverse possession or otherwise howsoever are hereby required to submit the same in writing along with documentary proof to the undersigned at their office as shown below **within 15 days from the date of publication hereof,** failing which our client shall proceed without any reference to such claim and the same, if any, will be considered as waived.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ITEM NO. 1: All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing **Site No. 164, BBMP E-Khata PID No. 5249873316, measuring East to West 50 feet and North to South 72 feet, in all measuring 3600 Sq.ft along with building having 3404.997 Sq.ft of built up area,** situated at Koramangala 1st Block, Bangalore Urban District and bounded on:
East by : Site No. 163; **West by** : Site No. 165;
North by: Site No. 173; **South by** : Road;

ITEM NO. 2: All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing **Site No. 165, BBMP E-Khata PID No. 9596427484, measuring East to West 50 feet and North to South 71.5 feet, in all measuring 3575 Sq.ft along with building having 5245.994 Sq.ft of built up area,** situated at Koramangala 1st Block, Bangalore Urban District and bounded on:
East by : Site No. 164; **West by** : Site No. 166;
North by: Site No. 172; **South by** : Road;

Dated this 18th day of August 2025 at Bangalore

M/S. LEGAL NEXUS,
ADVOCATES & CONSULTANTS,
No. 428, First Floor, 25 th Cross, 24 th Main, Sector 2, HSR Layout, Bangalore – 560 102,
Phone: 080-65555914,
Mobile: 9945688974; 9164150690.

ଓଡିଶା ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ଉନ୍ନୟନ ଓ ବିପଣନ ସମିତି
ପଞ୍ଚାୟତିରାଜ ଓ ପାନୀୟ ଜଳ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡିଶା ସରକାର
Odisha Rural Development & Marketing Society
creating competence and values in rural Odisha
Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Department, Government of Odisha

ORMAS
SIRD & PR Campus, Unit-VIII, Bhubaneswar, Odisha-751012, India
Tel : 0674-2565870/71
Email:ormashq@gmail.com
Website :www.ormas.org

No. 2504 **Date:14/08/2025**

File No: ORMAS-MKT-MISC-0005-2025

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

ORMAS under the Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Department, Government of Odisha (the Client) invites sealed proposals from the eligible bidders through e-tender process for following activities:

1. **Selection of an Agency for End-to-End Promotion of ORMAS Products through Digital Marketing and E-Commerce.**
2. **Selection of an Agency for Strengthening ORMAS Retail Outlets and Establishing Airport Retail Stores to Promote ORMAS Supported Rural Products**

Bidders fulfilling the prescribed eligibility criteria of the RFP can access and download the complete RFP Document and other details from **www.ormas.org/panchayat.odisha.gov.in/ www.tendersodisha.gov.in**

The major events under the bid process are:

Sl. No.	RFP for the activities	Last Date for Submission of Proposal	Mode of Submission	Date of Opening of Technical proposal	Date of Technical presentation and opening of Financial Proposal
1	Selection of an Agency for End-to-End Promotion of ORMAS Products through Digital Marketing and E-Commerce	03.09.2025 (by 5:00 PM)	Online (e-tender) www.tenders odisha.gov.in	04.09.2025 (at 11.00 AM)	To be communicated later
2	Selection of an Agency for Strengthening ORMAS Retail Outlets and Establishing Airport Retail Stores to Promote ORMAS Supported Rural Products	04.09.2025 (by 5:00 PM)		06.09.2025 (at 11.00 AM)	

The proposals received beyond the last date and time will be rejected without assigning any reason. In case of any further modification/ alteration/ amendment shall be published in the websites only. The authority reserves all the rights to reject any/ all proposals at any stage without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- Chief Executive Officer, ORMAS
CAD-1481 **OIPR-19004/11/0030/2526**

CORRIGENDUM

This is to inform the general public, that we have released a Public Notice dated 16-08-2025, in respect of PUBLIC NOTICE we have made **Site No.53,** not **Site No.83.**

S.SHABEER, Advocate,
S.S. Law Associates & Legal Consultants
No.12A, I Floor, HHS & HMS Complex, Cubbonpet Main Road, Bangalore -560 002

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the NOTICE of General Public, that my clients **MR.DHANUSH.S,** S/o Late Sridhar.M and **SMT.NIRMALA.S.S,** W/o Late Sridhar.M, intends to purchase the schedule property from **SRI. S.JAYARAJ,** S/o Sri.Selvaraj Annamalai.

This notice is hereby given for the information of General public that, any persons/Banks/Financial institutes having any right, title, share, claim or interest against/in the schedule property may contact me with their documentary/legitimate proof in support of their claim within **15 (fifteen) days** from the date of this notice. If no claim is so lodged with me within **15 (fifteen) days** from the date of publication, after which my clients shall proceed with the Absolute Sale Deed on the basis that there are no claims whatsoever, as if the same is free from all kinds of claims/encumbrances and no claim shall be entertained later.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable Residential Property bearing **Site No.6,** BBMP Khatha No.72/44/1/6, BBMP EPID No.6309179430, Situated at **Valagerahalli Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore,** now comes within the limits of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, Measuring : East to West : **30 feet** and North to South : **28 feet,** in all measuring : **840 Square feet** and bounded on

East by : Road, West by : Earlier Site No.6, Presently Site No.270, North by : Road and South by : Property belongs to Sri.Karibasappa.K and Sri.Ramesh Kumar.C.

Mrs.M.Manjula, Advocate
No.C-1, 1st Floor, Maruthi Pearl Plaza, D.V.G.Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru-560004. Mob : 9945027091.

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No: CEE/Tr(Op)ZH/EE(C)/37/2025-26/6288-90 **Date: 14.08.2025**

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION
(THROUH KARNATAKA PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PORTAL ONLY)

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited Invites Bids on electronic mode for the following Works against following enquiry numbers on Partial/Total Turnkey basis.

Sl. No.	Enquiry number/ Name of the Work
1	**KPTCL/2024-25/OW/WORK_INDENT2077/Call-3** Construction of Boundary compound wall and other allied works at **66/11kV S/s at Ramapura** in C.R Pattana taluk, Hassan district.
2	**KPTCL/2024-25/OW/WORK_INDENT2079/Call-3** Construction of security compound wall and Boundary compound wall and other allied works at **66/11kV S/s at Shravanabelagola** in C.R Pattana taluk, Hassan district.
3	**KPTCL/2024-25/OW/WORK_INDENT1667/ Call-4** Construction of RCC overhead tank & providing water supply arrangements & other allied works in MRS Colony, Shivamogga.

The bids will be received through electronic tendering mode only. The details regarding participation in the E-tendering process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink **"E Procurement KPTCL"** or **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 18.08.2025 @ 15:00hrs.** Any extension of due date for bid submission will be intimated in the KPP portal. Any details required in this regard can also have from the office of undersigned during office hours. All corrigendum/Addendums shall be noticed by the bidders before the last date of submission of the bids.

Sd/- Chief Engineer Electy.,
Transmission (Operations) Zone, KPTCL, Prasarana Bhavan, 3rd Floor, Santhepete, B.M.Road, Hassan - 573201

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RACHAPPA (holder of Indian Passport No.R2382020) son of SURYAKANT having permanent residence in 39 17th MAIN 12th CROSS NEAR FABMALL IDEAL HOMES RAJA RAJESHWARI NAGAR BANGALORE 98 INDIA (complete postal address in India) and presently residing in PB No. 191, PC No. 314, MUSSANAH, SULTANATE OF OMAN (complete postal address in Oman) intend to change my name from RACHAPPA (old name) to RACHAPPA JOPATE (New name) for all practical purpose. Any objection towards my name change may please be communicated to Embassy of India, Muscat, Diplomatic Quarters, Al Khuwair, P. Box No.1727, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.

XPRESSIONS

GREETINGS

SRIRAMA WHERE ARE YOU
A 33rd BIRTHDAY WITHOUT YOU
18-08-1983

DEAR SRIRAM PAPU
Praying for your Happiness
Wherever you are
Waiting for the Reunion
Your loved ones.

Roll recall

The Supreme Court's intervention highlights the ECI's procedural failures

In what must be seen as a rap on the knuckles of the Election Commission of India (ECI), the Supreme Court of India ordered it to publish the names of 65 lakh voters excluded from Bihar's draft electoral roll, and the reasons, following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. That it required the Court to compel the ECI to follow the basic principles of natural justice for these voters underscores the pressing lacunae in the institution's conduct of the SIR and the presumptuous and hasty manner of its implementation. There has been no consolidated list of the excluded electors whose names, the ECI claims, have been removed because they have died, or are untraceable or have fake/duplicate entries. No reasons have been provided against each name. Data analysed by *The Hindu* and ground reports have highlighted significant anomalies. A much higher number of women (close to 32 lakh) than men (close to 25 lakh) have been excluded despite more men having migrated, and recent death rates having been slightly higher among men too. Reports indicate that several voters have been wrongly identified as dead or had not been enumerated despite having valid voter IDs and proof of residence across areas. The Court's intervention now provides a meaningful way – the ECI deadline of September 1 to complete the filing of claims and objections is near – for such voters to address their anomalous situations.

The Court will continue to hear the case on the SIR which has other problematic elements to it. The constitutionality of the exercise itself, conducted after the ECI's own summary revision in January, remains to be adjudicated. Also, the ECI still insists that enumerated voters in the draft roll are vetted by Election Registration Officers based on the availability of one of 11 indicative documents, which do not include the more universally available Aadhaar or ration cards. With the Court ordering the ECI to allow excluded citizens to file objections with their Aadhaar card and having nudged it to accept this document in two previous hearings, the ECI must now include the Aadhaar card as an identity document also. The Court's order also shines a light on the ECI's use of non-transparent means to conduct the SIR; it has made it onerous for civil society to parse the electoral rolls and it continues to use that ploy even now by refusing to put up the full list of those excluded and the reasons in one place. Universal adult franchise has been a cornerstone of India's democracy since Independence. The upcoming hearings in the case and the ECI's actions in rectifying its role in Bihar's SIR process will go a long way in assuaging serious concerns about the voter enrolment process in the country today.

New start

Ukraine's security concerns must be addressed for lasting peace

The much-anticipated summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Anchorage, Alaska, did not yield a breakthrough on the Ukraine war but appeared to narrow the gaps between their positions on how to end the conflict. While Ukraine was the most contentious issue on the agenda, the summit was significant for several reasons. Relations between the world's two largest nuclear powers have been defined by hostility and mutual distrust. A stable, predictable relationship and the prospect of a new arms control pact – hinted at by Mr. Putin – are critical not just for stability in Eastern Europe but also for broader global stability. Yet, rebuilding Russo-American ties is inconceivable without peace in Ukraine. All sides in the Ukraine war publicly claim that they are committed to peace, but they differ sharply on how to achieve it. Ukraine and its European partners have called for an immediate ceasefire, a demand reiterated by Mr. Trump before meeting Mr. Putin. Russia has resisted calls for a ceasefire, insisting instead on a comprehensive peace agreement that addresses what Mr. Putin calls the conflict's "root causes". Mr. Trump appeared to endorse the Russian line when he said "the best way to end the horrific war" is to go directly to a peace agreement.

While the downside of the summit was its failure to deliver a breakthrough, the positive side is that it opened a diplomatic path that could lead to conflict resolution. Mr. Trump, who claimed that he and Mr. Putin agreed on "many points", spoke with European, NATO and Ukrainian leaders after the meeting. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is expected to visit the White House on Monday to discuss Mr. Putin's proposal. Mr. Trump also suggested that it is now "up to Zelenskyy" to strike a deal with Russia, "a very big power". Russia has consistently made three core demands to end the war – recognition for the Ukrainian territories it has annexed and Ukraine's "neutrality" and "demilitarisation". Post-summit reports suggest that Mr. Putin is open to freezing the war along the frontlines in the south (Zaporizhzhia and Kherson) provided Russia retains full control of Donbas (Donetsk and Luhansk). A settlement could also involve Russian withdrawal in the northeast (Kharkiv). Ukraine has so far said that it would not concede land for peace. The challenge before Mr. Trump is to sustain the talks aimed at narrowing the differences further to reach a workable compromise. While it makes perfect sense to end the war on practical terms, Mr. Trump should not impose an agreement on Kyiv. Peace would prevail in Eastern Europe only if Ukraine's security concerns are addressed and it is provided with credible assurances that Russia would not invade it again.

A conservation manual, drafted by the ordinary citizen

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In his Independence Day addresses delivered from the Red Fort, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been exhorting fellow citizens to preserve the memory of those who overthrew colonial rule. Even as his reminders have been timely, his tactics – enumerating a few freedom fighters' names and including some of their words in his speeches – are as well-worn as the Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI) approach to conserving the nation's built heritage. With a few exceptions, the ASI has largely been content with selecting monuments, isolating them, repairing them and occasionally polishing them. Given the enormity and complexity of India's past and the risk of large sections of it fading from our collective consciousness, it is time to articulate a more thoughtful and holistic approach to the conservation of ASI monuments.

Acknowledging that the current frameworks informing conservation are the result of certain historical circumstances is important. Driven by a conviction that edifices, if properly analysed, can unlock histories of communities and thus allow for governing them more effectively, colonial officers located and catalogued pillars, rock-cut caves, *stupas*, temples, mosques, citadels, water reservoirs, and other edifices, promulgated historical preservation laws, and prescribed procedures for maintaining their structural integrity. John Marshall's *Conservation Manual* (1923) advocated extensive repair of ancient monuments and reshaping their immediate surroundings into gardens.

Marshall's handbook continues to inflect the preservation of about 3,600 ASI sites, along with new laws, amendments, and provisions of international agreements. Notwithstanding these efforts, field surveys, audit reports, and court rulings establish that many protected monuments are falling apart. Recommendations of a conservation policy enunciated in 2014 are being irregularly followed. Not surprisingly, the government has begun to invite corporations to adopt monuments.

A road map for conserving monuments

Studying the writings of modern India builders is one way to begin articulating a new approach to conserving monuments. Consider lessons provided by Sarvodaya, Mahatma Gandhi's transcreation of a collection of essays by John Ruskin, a Victorian art critic. His rendering accentuated the art critic's advocacy of improving the social condition of all individuals irrespective of their backgrounds, discussed the importance of all vocations, and endorsed his admiration of craftspersons and their labour, even as it critiqued Ruskin's valorisation of Britain's imperial ambitions. Might the lessons that Gandhi learned and promoted inspire the ASI's new conservation manual to propose the following: when an edifice is conserved not only is its structural fabric to be tended, but the lives of all those who live around it and visit it are to be improved; and interpretive materials at an edifice should enable visitors to appreciate its builders' sophistication, inventiveness, and resilience.

> There needs to be a more thoughtful and holistic approach to the conservation of the Archaeological Survey of India's monuments

Conservation is a shared concern of contemporary practitioners of diverse disciplines including translators, health-care professionals, wildlife biologists, mycologists, and economists. By convening dialogues among and between these experts at various venues, listening to how they comprehend terms such as repair, preservation, and restoration and observing how audiences respond to them, the ASI can identify more principles of their new conservation manual.

Translators today are attentive to the style and mood that the authors of source texts have sought to nurture and are grasping how sentences are formed and meanings generated in unalike languages. They are recognising that connotations change over time. Thus, their outputs are intricate works in dialogical relationships with assorted pasts, and not obsequious reproductions of texts initially written in other languages. Can such viewpoints inspire the ASI conservation manual to recommend that archaeologists acknowledge their distance between the deep past and contemporary moment and make their physical interventions of a monument's fabric clearer for visitors to discern? Contemporary translators sophisticated thinking of a particular language aptness to render anew a certain text may also be used to inform a clause in the new manual: that periodic reviews be undertaken of the aptness of preservation materials to ensure that they do not harm historical fabrics.

Varied perspectives are important

Humans preserve themselves by saving memories. Listening to divergent perspectives allows memories to be exercised and sustains their propagation. Such insights should inspire the ASI to study how visitors are using protected monuments today and craft conservation principles thereafter. One way to do so would be to offer visitors opportunities to participate in open-ended conversations about their experiences.

Wildlife biologists are also thinking about protection. They reason that supporting a range of interactions occurring among and between sundry biotic and abiotic elements in an ecosystem and exchanges between networks are more efficacious strategies for restoring waning populations than safeguarding individual animals. Following this line of reasoning, might the ASI conservation manual recommend that archaeologists pay more attention to linkages between monuments and water bodies, fields, deserts, forests and settlements around them and deliberate whether certain boundary walls may be dismantled.

Mycologists have found that fungi are far from unsettling sights. Fungi are powerful agents that break down organic matter, form mutually beneficial relationships with plants including helping them access nutrients, cause diseases in humans but also provide medicines, and help produce food. Such discernments can stimulate the ASI's manual to encourage the conservation of thousands of small, half-forgotten ancient monuments strewn across the country. Old city walls, cisterns, cenotaphs and dovecotes can have multiple benefits for communities living around them including securing neighbourhoods, recharging ground water aquifers, bringing visitors who might boost local economies, providing habitats and creating public spaces.

Finally, contemporary economists' findings may also be generative. They have shown that value is produced by how things work and not just by their appearance. Following this dictum, the conservation manual may propose that it is more important for archaeologists to restore a *haveli's* natural ventilation systems than to regularly repaint its façade. Emphasising a particular resource's scarcity is another way in which value is created. Thus, further research should be undertaken to advance our knowledge of what makes ASI monuments sites of national significance. The new knowledge be used to justify larger budgets for their protection. The economic concept of creative destruction as an impetus for growth may also be utilised. For example, it can guide the transformation of old temples submerged in the reservoirs of large dams into laboratories for developing and testing technologies to document underwater sites and forge innovative alliances between historians, geologists and marine biologists.

The citizen's role

In a country as diverse as ours, conservation's meaning and value are always going to be positional and contested. Thus, all of us as ordinary citizens can help shape a new conservation manual by becoming more aware of our own locations and actions. We can also assist by further educating ourselves. Learning to read the language of the stones that monuments are built of, will allow us to listen to stories they tell and amplify largely silenced voices. We will also be able to glean builders' biases and use monuments as mirrors to confront our prejudices. Ultimately acquiring such literacy will empower us to discover India as a monument without walls and preserve ourselves as we shape a new future.

In Namibia, India shows a new way to engage Africa

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In his address to Namibia's National Assembly in July this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi quoted a Namibian poet, invoked the symbolism of the *Welwitschia mirabilis* plant (the national plant) and the Springbok, and sprinkled his remarks with phrases in Oshiwambo, earning laughter and applause.

The gesture suggested a deliberate effort to engage with culturally meaningful terms, reflecting a more grounded approach to partnership-building. It is a sharp contrast to western engagement, which continues to be shaped by conditional aid, travel bans, and episodic withdrawals such as the recent USAID cutback, and is increasingly tied to migration deterrence, with assistance hinging on controlling outward migrant flows.

The steps being pursued

India is pursuing a quieter, adaptive approach, favouring alignment over instruction and forming issue-based coalitions. Underlying this appears to be a deliberate three-step logic: evoking shared historical solidarities, engaging in present-day pragmatic cooperation, and investing in long-term, future-oriented ties. This offers insights into what more thoughtful, durable partnerships with African states might look like.

The first step anchors diplomacy in a shared anti-colonial heritage, drawing on historical memory not as nostalgia, but as a legitimate force of solidarity. There are gentle but meaningful reminders: that New Delhi hosted the South West Africa People's Organization's first-ever diplomatic office during Namibia's liberation struggle; that Lieutenant General Diwan Prem Chand, an Indian officer, commanded the United Nations peacekeeping forces during Namibia's delicate transition to independence. These references are not incidental. They create a sense of long-haul engagement, contrasting with the episodic presence of many other powers.

Second is to highlight the depth and the breadth of current cooperation. New Delhi's bilateral trade with Windhoek is $800 million, modest but growing, and supported by a $12 billion development partnership across Africa. More significant are India's targeted investments in capacity-building, including the India-Namibia Centre of Excellence in IT at the Namibia University of Science and Technology, and the 'India Wing' at the University of Namibia's Ongwediva campus, funded by a $12 million grant. These efforts leverage India's strengths in IT and respond to Namibia's youthful population and digital readiness.

> New Delhi is quietly reshaping its Africa engagement, with smart and issue-based partnerships

Third, and closely linked, India is laying out a road map for the future by pivoting toward knowledge-based cooperation. Namibia's recent adoption of India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI), the first country in Africa to implement this, signals a quiet revolution in tech diplomacy. If this succeeds, it will offer a model for transferring not just digital tools but also regulatory frameworks, institutional design, and user-centric tech architectures that India has stress-tested at scale.

Advantage Namibia

Crucial to this approach is the choice of partner. Namibia's political stability, rich mineral resources and growing technological base offer a strong foundation for India's engagement, grounded in shared histories and aligned futures. President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah's call to reform global economic and financial systems for fairness and resilience echoes India's own vision for inclusive, equitable governance. More than a bilateral partner, Namibia is a key collaborator in the Global South's broader effort to reshape international rules in line with their collective aspirations, agency, and demand for a more just world order.

While India and Namibia share a compelling vision for partnership, consistent follow-through remains a challenge. India's developmental ambitions are often criticised for uneven implementation, and its engagement with Africa has seen long lapses, evident in the recent visit to Namibia by an Indian head of government, the first in nearly three decades.

Though symbolically important, the visit's outcomes were modest: two memoranda of understanding on entrepreneurship and health, and Namibia's accession to the Global Biofuels Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. These are valuable steps but fall short of the scale the moment, and the bilateral potential, clearly calls for.

Notably absent was any major agreement on Namibia's critical mineral reserves. As a leading uranium producer, Namibia is a natural partner for countries such as India seeking resilient low-carbon supply chains. The visit offered a clear opportunity to outline a strategic framework, including resource access, local workforce development, or investment in value addition. Though the issue was acknowledged, discussions ultimately failed to produce concrete outcomes.

Regardless, India's approach, while not without its gaps, stands out not just for what it offers but also how it engages. India's quiet recalibration emphasises trust built through inclusive dialogue, acknowledging histories, and letting African priorities shape the agenda.

Move beyond symbolism

The upcoming India-Africa Forum Summit, anticipated in the near term, could serve as a vital platform to formalise and solidify these diplomatic efforts through institutional cooperation. It presents an opportunity for India to build on recent momentum and demonstrate that its commitment to partnership and mutual respect is backed by enduring political resolve.

Delivering on this vision, however, will require more than symbolism. It will entail confronting structural and operational shortcomings at home and ensuring that India's strategic ambitions are matched by sustained investment and institutional coherence. Ultimately, India's credibility as a Global South partner will rest not only on what it commits to but also on how consistently and collaboratively it follows through.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Alaska summit

U.S. President Donald Trump's summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska has only highlighted the danger of treating diplomacy like a property deal. Mr. Trump's advice to Ukraine — "make a deal, Russia is very big and they're not" — trivialises a war over sovereignty and security. Peace is built painstakingly, with credibility, trust, and sustained negotiation. A mediator must inspire confidence in both parties, not issue threats or headlines. He must present multiple frameworks — Plan A, B, and C — so that compromise feels like balance, not capitulation. Mr. Trump leans on bluster and boasts. His oft-repeated claim that he "stopped the India–Pakistan war" was flatly questioned in India. If such exaggerations define his approach, why should Ukrainians or Europeans trust him with their future? Unless Mr. Trump proves he can deliver more than theatrics, his "deal-making" will remain posturing, not peace-making.

Gopalaswamy J.,
Chennai

On Governors

The central government's rigorous defence of State Governors is strange. Perhaps the government should also care to explain the phenomenon of only Governors in Opposition-ruled States turning into a thorn in the flesh for democratically-elected State governments. Almost every Opposition-ruled State has been pointing an accusing finger against the Governor, accusing them of being driven by an agenda and hindering development in the respective State.

C.V. Aravind,
Bengaluru

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

A case for judicial introspection

Kaleeswaram Raj

Lawyer at the Supreme Court of India, who also appeared in the Anoop Baranwal case

At least a few from the ruling dispensation have asked why the Opposition is not formally taking up the electoral roll issue before the Supreme Court. However, the reluctance shown by the major Opposition parties is quite reasonable and even justifiable.

The Modi regime promulgated the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act in 2023 with a view to nullify the Constitution Bench judgment in *Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India* (2023). The Act excluded the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and included a Cabinet Minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister in his place, as part of the Selection Committee for choosing the Election Commission of India (ECI). This statute was legally challenged in several writ petitions which are yet to be finally heard. Significantly, the petitioners also sought a stay of the enactment. A Bench, led by Justice Sanjiv Khanna (as he then was), heard the application for a stay and rejected it on March 22, 2024, by a detailed order in *Dr. Jaya Thakur and others v. Union of India* (2024). Had the statute been stayed, the country could have had a different umpire for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and the subsequent Assembly elections. In all probability, a more independent ECI could have had the potential to conduct the elections more fairly and impartially. That this did not happen shows the Supreme Court's failure to act at a time when it was supposed to.

The present type of ECI

In *Anoop Baranwal*, the Constitution Bench analysed Article 324 of the Constitution dealing with the appointment of Election Commissioners. It spoke of the need to take the appointment "out of the exclusive hands of the executive". It said that "a pliable ECI, an unfair and biased overseer of the foundational exercise of adult franchise, which lies at the heart of democracy, who obliges the powers that be, perhaps offers the surest gateway to acquisition and retention of power". The Court was assertive when it said that "the outpouring of demands for an impartial mode of appointment of the members require, at the least, the banishing of the impression that the ECI is appointed by less than fair means". This shows the rationale behind prescribing the CJI as a member of the Selection Committee for the ECI.

Yet, a few months later, the Centre ensured that only "persons under the thumb of the executive", as feared by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, dominate the Selection Committee. When this was shown to the Supreme Court, it took a very conservative and dangerous stand, saying it won't interfere with a statute for it carries a "presumption of validity". This is how the present type of ECI was allowed to function.

At a time when majoritarianism often rests on electoral frauds, courts across the world face newer challenges, both jurisprudential and political. In a paper titled 'Abusive Judicial Review: Courts Against Democracy' (2020), David Landau and Rosalind Dixon have conducted an extensive global survey on the topic. According to them, "courts have upheld and thus legitimated regime actions that helped actors consolidate power, undermine the Opposition, and tilt the electoral playing field heavily in their favour". They explain that sometimes "(the) clever authoritarians often do their manipulation well before elections have actually been held, by consolidating power, stacking key institutions such as courts and electoral commissions, and harassing Opposition parties and leaders". The paper says courts in countries such as Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia aided and facilitated electoral frauds which ensured continuation of autocracies. On the other hand, there are few instances where the courts could prevent electoral manipulation and the consequent subversion of democracy. The judgment in Baranwal exemplifies such judicial vigilance.

> The only way to rescue our democracy would be to restore the position laid down in the *Baranwal* verdict and to nullify the 2023 enactment.

Fourth branch institutions

Article 324 failed to prescribe a body free from the ruling executive for installing the ECI. Modern Constitutions have reorganised the need to evolve fourth Branch institutions (in addition to the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary) which are autonomous and independent of the ruling dispensation. The Constitution of South Africa envisages a cluster of state institutions for "supporting constitutional democracy". The Chapter Nine institutions, as they are called, include the Electoral Commission of South Africa. The silence of the Indian Constitution prompted the Court in *Baranwal* to prescribe a fairer body for choosing the ECI. It was an instance of imaginative interpretation of the relevant constitutional provision. However, Parliament failed the Court and the people when it enacted the 2023 Act. The Court's refusal to stay the enactment practically nullified its own hard labour and intelligence in redefining the ECI as an independent fourth branch establishment.

In India, electoral manipulation, as alleged by the Opposition, would call for a deeper and comprehensive analysis by a fair agency. The Court, on its own, will not be able to carry out this exercise. The only way to rescue our democracy would be to restore the position laid down in the *Baranwal* verdict and to nullify the 2023 enactment. A Selection Committee with the CJI in it will have to induct another ECI by way of a fresh selection process. Such an ECI will have to act as a Truth Commission to investigate the alleged instances of electoral scam. The courtesy expected from the present dispensation would be to facilitate such a course by removing the present ECI.

The journey to Singapore is just a start

Naidu has to repair the State's economic narrative and his own political legacy

STATE OF PLAY

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Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's visit to Singapore from July 26 to 30 was a strategic exercise in economic diplomacy – an effort to reaffirm his government's commitment to building a globally competitive investment climate while quietly distancing the state from the shadow of policy volatility that marked the previous YSRCP regime.

Mr. Naidu's foreign between 2014 and 2019 and now in 2025 are stories of contrasts. Between 2014 and 2019, in his first term as Chief Minister of a State that had been newly bifurcated, Mr. Naidu wanted to create a capital, attract foreign investment, and market Andhra Pradesh as an innovation-led region. Amaravati was the centrepiece of this vision, and Singapore played a starring role through consultancy company Surbana Jurong's master plan.

His first-round global engagements were aspirational. They focused on building brand Andhra, learning best practices in governance, agriculture, and infrastructure, and positioning the State as the 'Sunrise Andhra Pradesh'. The results were mixed: he secured significant goodwill and several MoUs, but political headwinds and fiscal constraints meant that not all plans matured into reality.

In 2025, the circumstances could not be more different. Returning to power after defeating the YSRCP, Mr. Naidu has inherited a State grappling with damaged investor confidence, policy reversals, and economic slowdown. This time, his travels have the urgency of a rescue mission. The

rhetoric has shifted from building something entirely new to repairing and restoring what was lost. The narrative now is 'Reset and Rebuild Andhra Pradesh'.

One of the most notable shifts in Mr. Naidu's 2025 pitch is its geographic focus. The spotlight has moved from Amaravati to Visakhapatnam, now framed as the State's economic nucleus. Amaravati – once his crowning vision – was derailed, mocked, and abandoned under the previous regime. By contrast, Visakhapatnam offers a compelling narrative: a coastal city with thriving port infrastructure, tech parks, and emerging data clusters, well-positioned as the 'Gateway to Southeast Asia'.

Singapore investors were told of opportunities in green hydrogen, quantum computing, and digital infrastructure. Mr. Naidu's meetings highlighted Google's interest in establishing a data centre, alongside new housing projects with Surbana Jurong and an Eversendai facility. These signals were meant to show that Andhra Pradesh is back on the map for cutting-edge sectors.

Yet the conversations in Singapore were inevitably shaped by the past. The YSRCP government's abrupt withdrawal from key Singapore-linked projects remains fresh in institutional memory.

From 2019 to 2024, several high-profile MoUs and joint ventures with Singaporean entities were unilaterally cancelled or left to wither. This had a chilling effect, not just in Singapore but in global business circles that had been watching Andhra Pradesh's trajectory. While no official in Singapore publicly criticised the previous administration during Mr. Naidu's visit, the message during private conversations was reportedly that they would "revert after making an internal assessment".

The Telugu diaspora's embrace of Naidu was unambiguous. Over 2,500 NRIs gathered to greet him. But in boardrooms, investors wanted to see sustained stability and early wins before making major commitments.

Mr. Naidu knows the criticism from his first term – that too many MoUs failed to materialise – still hangs over him. This time, he cannot afford a repeat. For Naidu 2.0 to succeed, agreements must translate into jobs, infrastructure, and visible economic growth.

If the Singapore trip yields tangible results within the next year and a half, Mr. Naidu will not only consolidate his position at home but also set a precedent for how Indian chief ministers can leverage foreign engagements to drive State-level economic diplomacy. If not, critics will portray it as an expensive exercise in public relations, echoing the opposition YSRCP's current claims that the visit was more show than substance.

The stakes in 2025 are higher than in 2014. Back then, Mr. Naidu had the luxury of time and the novelty of leading a new State. Today, he faces a compressed political calendar and the burden of repairing both the state's economic narrative and his own political legacy. Ultimately, the Singapore visit is less a victory lap than the opening move in a long, complex game.

India's patent landscape: universities as changemakers

The country is steadily moving from being merely a consumer of global technology to becoming its creator

DATA POINT

Twincle Halder
Vidhya Soundararajan

For 'Make in India' to succeed, India must "first discover, then invent, and then make," said David Gross, American theoretical physicist and co-recipient of the 2004 Nobel Prize in Physics, at the inaugural Quantum India Bengaluru Summit 2025. Investment in research and development (R&D) and the strengthening of innovation capabilities are particularly relevant, given the growing uncertainty in global trade and financial flows.

How is India faring on the innovation front? Are we moving towards producing technology of our own? Statistics from the Office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks are telling. In the early 2000s, countries such as China, the U.S., Japan, Germany, and South Korea dominated global filings, with Indian institutions accounting for less than 20% of the patents filed domestically. That picture has shifted dramatically **(Chart 1)**. For the first time in 2023, Indian-origin filings surpassed those from any single foreign country. Indian applicants accounted for 57% of all patent filings – a milestone marking India's growing role in the global intellectual property ecosystem. Even among granted patents, India's share has been rising, overtaking the U.S. as the second-largest recipient in 2021.

This transformation did not happen overnight. India is steadily moving from being merely a consumer of global technology to becoming its creator. This shift reflects the government's sustained efforts to build an innovation-friendly environment and support local inventors through initiatives such as the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy and the Atal Innovation Mission, which have encouraged startups, students, and researchers to think big and protect their ideas. Amendments to patent rules have introduced reforms such as expedited examinations for specific groups, simplified timelines, reduced application fees by 80% for educational institutions, MSMEs, and startups, and full digitalisation of filing and communication. With continued investment in faster, more efficient patent systems, stronger inventor support, and better linkage between patents and commercial value, India's innovation story could strengthen even further over the next two decades.

Historically, mechanical and chemical engineering dominated the patent landscape. By contrast, filings in computer science rose from just 1.27% in 2000 to 26.5% in 2023, while electrical engineering grew from 8.27% to 16.41%. Physics-related patents increased from 2% to 4%, and biomedical patents jumped from 0.6% to 10% over the same period.

Nearly 80% of patents filed in the past two years are still "awaiting decision," reflecting both rising volumes and bureaucratic and legal complexities. Nonetheless, processing times have improved. In the early 2000s, patent grants could take 8-10 years; by the late 2010s and early 2020s, many were approved within 2-3 years, with some granted in the same year of filing **(Chart 2)**. This acceleration reflects the maturing of India's intellectual property infrastructure and its alignment with the government's innovation push.

Even the face of patent filers in India is changing. In 2000, about 43% of Indian patents were filed by companies. But by 2023, this share fell to under 17% **(Chart 3)**. Meanwhile, the share of filings from individuals jumped from under 10% in 2000 to around 32% by 2023. Government bodies and hospitals remained minor contributors. Educational institutions also increased their share steadily, reaching nearly 43% in recent years.

Government initiatives have helped drive this change. For example, KAPILA (Kalam Program for IP Literacy and Awareness), launched in 2020, promotes IP awareness in higher education institutions. The Atal Innovation Mission, launched in 2016 by NITI Aayog, fosters problem-solving skills and entrepreneurship within universities and research centres. Awards for outstanding patents by government and industry bodies further incentivise innovation.

Universities have also taken the lead by establishing dedicated IP cells and legal support units to assist faculty, researchers, and students with patent filing, technology transfer, and IP monetisation. For instance, IIT Madras doubled its patents granted from 156 in 2022 to 300 in 2023, while IIT Bombay led nationally in 2023-24 with 421 patents granted.

With government and universities creating an enabling environment, sustained increases in research funding are essential to maintain momentum. Foundational and technology-driven research often starts in university labs or early-stage startups – long before patenting. India's R&D expenditure currently stands at just 0.67% of GDP, far below the U.S. (3.5%) and China (2.5%). Raising this to around 2% of GDP is critical if India is to become a global knowledge leader. This investment is even more urgent in today's uncertain global trade and financial environment, as India must strive for self-sufficiency in both consumer and advanced technologies.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the relentless efforts of professors and researchers, often working with limited resources, to expand the boundaries of knowledge. Strengthening their work through greater funding is not just support for academia; it is a strategic investment in India's long-term growth and global standing.

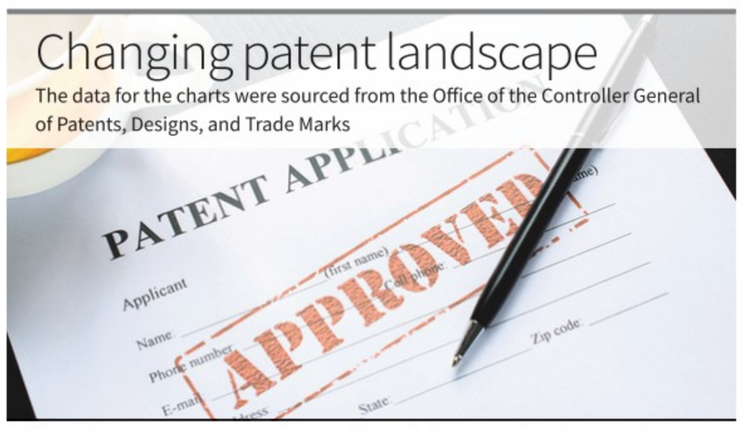


Chart 1: Country-wise share of patent filings (left axis, in %) and the total number of filings over time (right axis)

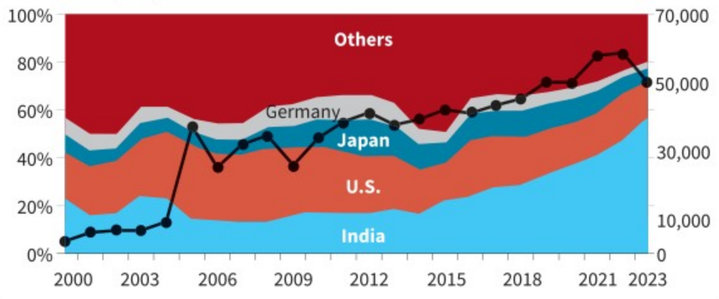


Chart 2: Average time taken to grant patents in India since 2000 (in number of years)

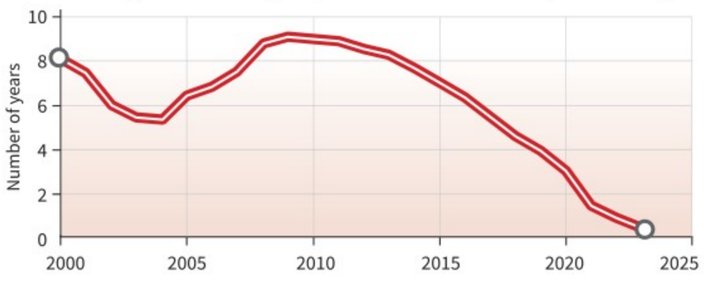
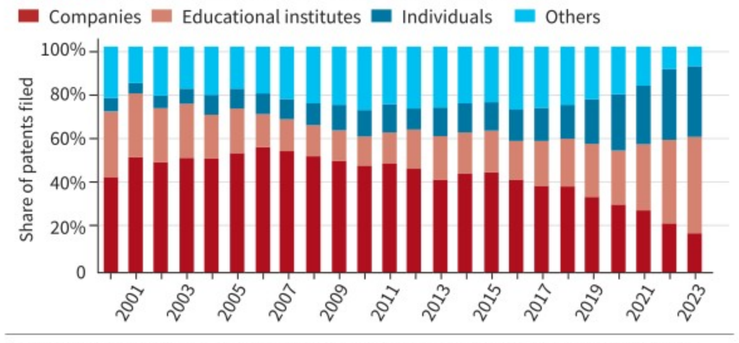


Chart 3: Share of patents filed based on filing entity type (in %)



Twincle Halder and Vidhya Soundararajan are affiliated with Centre for Advanced Financial Research and Learning

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 18, 1975

Boom days no more for Dubai gold dealers

Dubai, Aug. 17: This little Sheikhdom's once-active gold smugglers have run into rough times, victims of high international prices and an Indian crackdown.

Dubai alone imported a good chunk of the non-communist world's gold production of 258 tonnes in 1970. Five years later imports have dropped to only five tonnes.

In the boom days, most of the gold was minted in London and Zurich into small bars, airfreighted to Dubai and loaded in Arabian dhows of timeless design.

The dhows sailed through the Arabian Sea to slip the precious metal into India and Pakistan for sale to black-market dealers. But those days are gone, at least for the time being.

"There are really three reasons why the gold has dwindled almost to nil here," said a banker formerly engaged in the trade. "There has been pressure from India, the fluctuations in the world gold price have put the risk up and the business expansion here has provided other outlets for speculative investment."

A Pakistani took time off from his new job of dealing in steel bars, portland cement and gold in Dubai's stock and commodity exchange to explain: "The financial risks in smuggling gold to India are now three times greater than they were five years ago."

A Dubai-based smuggler could make an average 10 per cent net profit on each trip. Making several trips a month, he could soon double his stake. While the price of gold on the Indian black market has gone up, it has not kept pace with the world price.

The dhows now carry expensive watches and luxury fabrics. But this trade too has suffered a recession, with ringleaders in the smuggling network being rounded up. "You can't totally stop it," said an Indian diplomat here. "It has always gone on and it will always go on."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 18, 1925

The "Arabian nights"

Berlin, Aug. 17: It is reported from Leningrad that the reorganisation of the State Library there has resulted in the unearthing of an ancient Persian manuscript which orientalists of the Soviet Academy of Sciences declare is the first manuscript original version of the Thousand and One Nights, about 1,800 years old.

From Page One

EC tells Rahul to submit affidavit or apologise

"According to law, if errors in the voter list are not reported in time, if an election petition is not filed in the High Court within 45 days of a voter choosing their candidate, and then attempts are made to confuse people by using wrong words such as 'vote theft', then what else can this be if not an insult to the Constitution of India?" the CEC asked.

"More than one crore employees are engaged in the election exercise. Can 'vote chori' happen in such a transparent process?" he added.

On accusations made by the Opposition regarding the Maharashtra Assembly election, he said: "When the results came, suddenly they remembered that the rolls are wrong? No objection with evidence has been filed against any voter with the Maharashtra CEO. The elections happened eight months ago. Why no election petition was filed?"

"It was said, why so much polling in last hours. Every hour, there was 10% polling and in the last hour, there was less than 10% polling. Telling something repeatedly does not mean it will become truth," Mr. Kumar said.

'Vote theft rampant, BJP using false means'

He thanked Mr. Gandhi and other Opposition leaders for launching the yatra, and praised the commitment of his father, the ailing RJD patriarch Lalu Prasad, in attending the rally and amplifying people's voices, despite doctors' advice to avoid crowds.

Mr. Prasad stressed the need to oust the BJP from power. "Throw out the thieves and the BJP to save Bihar. Strengthen the democracy," he said.

Party workers and supporters of the Opposition INDIA bloc gathered in large numbers at the venue waving flags and chanting slogans in support of their party leaders

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge accused the Election Commission of becoming an "agent" of the government. "People should help us to protect the Constitution. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's Constitution allows everyone to cast their votes....Congress is fighting to save your votes," he said. The BJP and RSS are dangerous for poor people, women and youth, he said. "The BJP is troubling us everywhere, be it in textbooks or universities. The Governors have become acolytes of the government," he said.

'GST reforms to benefit poor and middle class'

According to sources, the new GST structure, with 18% and 5% rates, will have the twin objectives of making tax categories and compliance processes simpler and more rational.

"The new GST regime will make our taxation more equitable and will see reduced taxes. The template will be more from the consumers' point of view, and will be explained to the States from the consumers' point of view."

The Centre expects any reduction in revenues to be soon offset by new buoyancy in the economy stemming from the rate rationalisation and process simplification. "Reduced rates will not lead to reduced revenues, and we expect compliance and collection going up," an official said, adding that the forthcoming regime will be "fiscally sustainable".

Most of the items in the 28% rate of the GST will move to 18% and "a few" will go to a 40% bracket, which will apply to exceptional items, termed as "sin goods", sources said. "Revenues may fall in the very short run but we expect the change in consumption and ease of compliance to make up for it. Thus, it will be a fairly fiscally sustainable exercise," they added.

Deepavali deadline

The Centre expects the States to be on board with the proposals in time for the Deepavali deadline - October 20 - it had set for itself to set the new tax structure in motion.

In a press release, the Ministry of Finance had said the Centre would be engaging with the State governments in the subsequent weeks, in the run-up to the next GST Council meeting. "I hope all the States will cooperate with this initiative," Mr. Modi said on Sunday.

Two Groups of Ministers (GoMs) comprising representatives of the State governments – one on rate rationalisation and another on compensation cess – will have to approve the changes before they are sent to the GST Council for approval.

"The concerns regarding any potential revenue losses are not theirs [Opposition-ruled States] alone. The Centre and the States should work together to expand the revenues, using this opportunity. I do not think anyone will or can oppose the proposed reduction in rates," the functionary said.

Both GoMs, followed by the GST Council, are expected to meet in the coming weeks. One source said the compensation cess will soon cease, before its legal end-date of March 31, 2026.

That loan will be repaid before time. However, this also creates a problem for the Centre as the cess also applies on sin goods like tobacco.

"If the cess ends, then this would substantially lower the effective rate of tax on tobacco, gutka, and other sin goods," the source explained. "And this is something the Centre cannot be doing. So, this was yet another reason why the GST revamp needed to be done soon."

Five children among seven killed in cloudburst, landslide in Kathua

Five of family, including four children, lost their lives after a cloudburst hit Jodh Ghati village in Rajbagh; a woman and her daughter died in a landslide at Bagra village in Janglote; Army evacuates injured as Amit Shah promises help from Centre

Press Trust of India
JAMMU

All that remains: Damaged structures at a cloudburst-hit village in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. PTI

Seven people, including five children, were killed in a cloudburst and landslide in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir early on Sunday, officials said.

Calamity struck Jodh Ghati village in Rajbagh and Bagra village in Janglote after heavy overnight rain in the district, leading to an increase in the level of waterbodies and the submerging of many low-lying areas, officials said.

The cloudburst in Kathua came three days after flash floods triggered by a cloudburst struck Chisoti village in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir on August 14, leaving 61 people dead and more than 100 injured.

Officials said a man and his four sons lost their lives in Jodh Ghati, which was hit by the cloudburst, snapping access to the village and causing damage to several mud houses. A woman and her daughter were killed in a landslide triggered by the rain at Bagra village of Janglote.

The Army has evacuated six injured people to hospital from Jodh Ghati. "Indian Army columns on the ground in Kathua have rescued families; they are providing hope, food, and care after the cloudburst," Rising Star Corps said in a post on X.

The officials identified the deceased as Surmu Din (32); his sons Fanu (6), Shedu (5), Zulfoon (15), and Tahu (2), all residents of Jodh Ghati; and Renu Devi (39) and her daughter Radhika (9) in Janglote.

A video on social media showed a couple of collapsed mud-houses belonging to the victims, with survivors trying to pull out a half-buried girl from the rubble and frantically searching for missing people.

The landslide also hit Changda village in the Kathua police station area and Dilwan-Hutli in the Lakhanpur police station area, but there were no reports of major damage.

The heavy rain have led to a sharp increase in the level of most waterbodies, with the Ujh river nearing the danger mark, officials said, adding several low lying areas were submerged with flood water entering homes and shops. The police helpline numbers in Kathua are 9858034100 or 112.

Train traffic has been disrupted along the Jammu-Pathankot rail line, prompting authorities to cancel local trains and short-terminate others.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on situation and assured support. "Spoke with the Lieutenant Governor and Chief Minister regarding the cloudburst in Kathua. Relief and rescue operations are being carried out by the local administration, and NDRF teams have also been rushed to the site," Mr. Shah wrote on X.

CM announces aid

In a post shared on X, Mr. Abdullah said the assistance from the CM's relief fund was aimed at providing immediate relief and helping affected families rebuild their lives.

"Two lakh rupees would be given to the deceased, ₹1 lakh to the severely injured, and ₹50,000 for minor injuries," the post read.

He also sanctioned ₹1 lakh for totally damaged homes, ₹50,000 for severely damaged houses, and ₹25,000 for partially damaged houses.

The weather office has forecast light to moderate rain and thunder showers at many places with intense showers or heavy rains at few places in Jammu division.

Death toll in Kishtwar cloudburst reaches 61

Press Trust of India
CHISOTI

The death toll due to a cloudburst in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district rose to 61, as rescuers continued operations for the fourth day on Sunday, effecting three more blasts to blow up boulders around a major impact spot, officials said.

Army engineers have started working on setting up a Bailey bridge to restore connectivity to Chisoti village and the Machail Mata shrine, and further intensify the rescue efforts.

With the recovery of another body from the debris, officials on Sunday said the death toll had risen to 61.

The cloudburst struck Chisoti, the last motorable village *en route* the Machail Mata temple, on August 14, leaving over 100 injured, other than the fatalities. The number of missing persons has come down to 50, while the bodies of three persons still remain unidentified.

The rescuers are utilising more than a dozen earth-movers and other heavy equipment, while the NDRF has mobilised its resources, including dog squads, to speed up the rescue operation.

Uttarakhand Cabinet clears Bill for minority education institutions

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

In what could be the first-of-its-kind draft legislation, the Uttarakhand Cabinet on Sunday approved the Uttarakhand Minority Educational Institutions Bill, 2025, which, if enacted, would extend benefits hitherto available only to Muslim educational institutions in the State to educational institutions of Sikh, Jain, Christian, Buddhist, and Parsi communities.

The Bill will be introduced in the coming session of the Legislative Assembly, which begins on August 19.

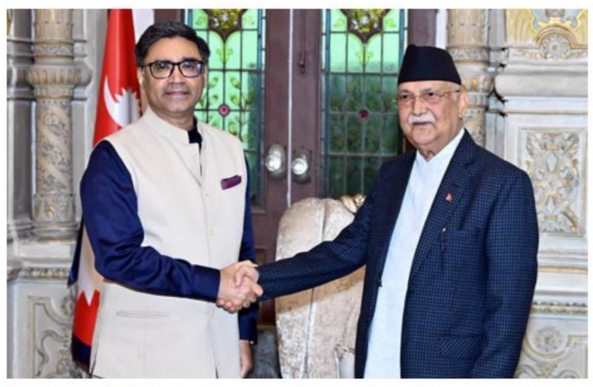
"The Uttarakhand Madrasa Education Board Act, 2016 and the Uttarakhand Non-Government Arabic and Persian Madrasa Recognition Rules, 2019 will stand repealed from July 1, 2026," an official involved in planning the Bill said.

The State authority will ensure education meets the standards set by the Uttarakhand Board of School Education, and student evaluations remain fair and transparent, as per the Bill.

"The Bill does not interfere in the establishment and administration of minority educational institutions, but ensures that educational excellence is maintained. To obtain recognition, educational institutions must be registered under the Societies Act, Trust Act, or Companies Act. Ownership of land, bank accounts, and other assets must be in the name of the institution. Recognition can be withdrawn in cases of financial mismanagement, lack of transparency, or activities against religious and social harmony," the official said.

Nepal PM likely to visit India next month; officials meet in Kathmandu

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI



Boosting ties: Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri calls on Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli in Kathmandu on Sunday. X/ ANI

Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli is likely to visit India in September, sources said on Sunday as Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met Mr. Oli in Kathmandu.

Mr. Misri, who reached Kathmandu on Sunday morning, met Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba and held a detailed meeting with officials of the Nepal Ministry of Foreign Affairs led by his counterpart Amrit Bahadur Rai.

'Neighbourhood first'

"We discussed the full range of India-Nepal relations, with a focus on strengthening our connectivity, trade and development cooperation. Nepal appreciates India's neighbourhood first policy and looks forward to continued growth of our bilateral ties," said Ms. Rana Deuba after meeting the Foreign Secretary. Sources are yet to provide details of the points that were discussed between the two Foreign Secretaries of India and Nepal hinting at possible agreements that could be taken up during Mr. Oli's India visit.

Pending from last year

Prime Minister Oli's visit to India has been a pending matter for the past several months when the Nepal side displayed willingness to schedule it. Mr. Oli took charge in July last year with Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulating him. Mr. Modi had said: "Look forward to working closely to further strengthen the deep bonds of friendship between our two countries and to further expand our mutually beneficial cooperation for the progress and prosperity of our peoples."

Soon after that on August 5, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh was overthrown in a student-cum-people's uprising highlighting the need for India to maintain close ties with leaders in the neighbourhood.

Closer outreach

Subsequently, India reached out to the leaders in the neighbourhood and hosted Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu in October 2024. However, Mr. Oli's visit to India continued to be delayed. Despite the lack of high-level political dialogue, Nepal and India have worked together in recent months.

Earlier, Nepal supported India's fight against terrorism when New Delhi launched Operation Sindoor.

On July 22, India and Nepal held Home Secretary-level talks in New Delhi where a decision was taken to strengthen bilateral security cooperation and border management.

Bengal police say teachers plan to incite violence

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

A section of protesting teachers who lost their appointments due to a recruitment scam, plan to cause violence at a march to the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) headquarters on Monday, the police said.

Bidhannagar Deputy Commissioner of Police Anish Sarkar released an audio conversation in which two persons were allegedly planning to incite violence at the march.

Sumon Biswas, one of the protest organisers, rejected the allegations. He said that the teachers will meet the WBSSC chairman to demand answers on the need for a re-examination.

BJD chief and former Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik hospitalised

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

Naveen Patnaik

Former Odisha Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition Naveen Patnaik was admitted to a city hospital after he complained of uneasiness on Sunday.

State Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling, who visited the hospital, said that Mr. Patnaik was stable but was under observation.

The five-time Chief Minister had just recovered after a spine surgery in a Mumbai hospital in June.

The Biju Janta Dal (BJD) said that the former Chief Minister was receiving treatment for dehydration and his condition was improving fast.

"With the grace of Lord Jagannath, he will soon be discharged," the BJD said.

The 78-year-old BJD chief could not travel much in the run-up to the 2024 election reportedly due to bad health condition.

V. K. Pandian, his trusted aide, had then taken over the campaign for the BJD, which was widely believed to be one of the major factors that caused the party's loss.

CJI Gavai inaugurates Bombay HC circuit Bench

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai inaugurated the Bombay High Court's new circuit Bench in Kolhapur district on Sunday.

The Bench was inaugurated after years of demands raised by different stakeholders to ease the burden for litigants and lawyers facing difficulty in travelling to Mumbai.

At present, apart from the principal Bench in Mumbai, the High Court has two more Benches – at Nagpur in the Vidarbha region and Aurangabad (Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar) in the Marathwada region. A third Bench of the High Court sits in adjoining Goa.

Two children among eight dead in car-SUV collision in Gujarat

Press Trust of India
SURENDRANAGAR

Eight persons, including five women and two children, were charred to death after the car carrying them collided with an SUV, landed in a roadside ditch, and burst into flames in Surendranagar district of Gujarat on Sunday, they police said.

The accident occurred on a highway near Dedadara village in Wadhwan taluka around 3.40 p.m. when the car was headed towards Surendranagar city from Kadu village.

Soon after the crash, the car landed in a roadside ditch and turned into a ball of fire, trapping all the occupants even as local people looked on helplessly.

"All eight persons in the car were charred to death," Surendranagar DIG Girish Pandya said.

"Three others travelling in the SUV escaped with minor injuries and were rushed to a hospital," the officer added.

A police official said the fire reduced the car to a burnt shell, and local fire brigade personnel struggled to extricate the bodies.

The deceased individuals included two girls, aged 10 months and 13 years respectively, five women in the age group of 35-55 years, and the driver.

"All eight bodies were taken to the Surendranagar government hospital for postmortem," Mr. Pandya said.

CEC 'resorted to veiled threats rather than transparency': Cong.

Opposition accuses EC of threatening Rahul Gandhi, displaying 'blatant partisanship', and failing to respond to the pointed questions they raised on the electoral roll revision in Bihar; CEC defended SIR, dismissing the criticism as 'misinformation'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Opposition accused the Election Commission (EC) of threatening the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, and displaying "blatant partisanship" instead of answering any of the "pointed" questions raised by the Opposition parties on the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar. The Opposition asked if the EC would implement the Supreme Court's direction to make public the list of 65 lakh voters not included on Bihar's draft electoral roll.

The revision was aimed at removing all discrepancies, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar said at a press conference here on Sunday. The CEC accused some parties of "spreading misinformation" about the SIR.

> It is deeply unfortunate for the country that a major Constitutional institution has reduced itself to a combative, politically motivated body – shielding its fast-dwindling credibility instead of taking the urgent steps needed to restore voter trust
>
> K.C. VENUGOPAL, Congress general secretary (organisation)

Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal, in a post on X, said the CEC had made hollow claims of neutrality, failed to respond to Mr. Gandhi's pointed questions, and resorted instead to veiled threats rather than committing to transparency. "It is deeply unfortunate for the country that a major Constitutional institution has reduced itself to a combative, politically motivated body – shielding its fast-dwindling credibility instead of taking the urgent steps needed to restore voter trust," he said.

SC order

The nation was "waiting and watching" whether the EC would implement in "letter and spirit" the Supreme Court's orders of August 14, Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said. The top court has directed the poll panel to publish, in a searchable format, details of 65 lakh voters who have not been included in Bihar's draft electoral rolls.

Mr. Kumar's opening remarks that the panel made no distinction between the ruling party and the Opposition was "laughable", Mr. Ramesh said. "Notably, the CEC answered none of the pointed questions raised by Shri. Rahul Gandhi meaningfully," Mr. Ramesh said. Mr. Gandhi had "simply stated facts revealed by the EC's own data", he added.

"The EC stands thoroughly exposed not only for its incompetence but also for its blatant partisanship," Mr. Ramesh said.

Senior Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Manoj K. Jha also accused the CEC of not answering any important questions or addressing the "core issues" raised by the Opposition. "The manner in which the press conference was conducted, it is very difficult to distinguish whether it was a political party holding it or a body which is supposed to be a neutral umpire," Mr. Jha said.

"The institution is working hard to firmly establish itself as the branch office of the BJP," Trinamool Congress's Rajya Sabha parliamentary party leader Derek O'Brien said.

The EC's actions risked plunging the nation into avoidable chaos and must be rectified immediately, Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) general secretary M.A. Baby said. "Rather than addressing substantive issues, the CEC dismissed legitimate complaints, deflected accountability, and blamed the Opposition," Mr. Baby said.

The EC miserably failed to answer any of the questions raised by Mr. Rahul Gandhi, said CPI National Council member Binoy Viswam.

List of names deleted from Bihar draft rolls shared on district websites, says CEC

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on Sunday said the list of around 65 lakh names deleted from the draft electoral rolls of Bihar following the special intensive revision (SIR) had been posted on websites of district magistrates "within 56 hours" of the Supreme Court's order even as he asserted that the SIR had become necessary due to the many complaints received from political parties over discrepancies on electoral rolls over the past 20 years.

At a press conference on a day when the Opposition INDIA bloc began the 16-day "Vote Adhikar Yatra" rally from Bihar, the CEC said the list of deleted voters was also "searchable" by elector photo identity card (EPIC) numbers as mandated by the Supreme Court.

Gyanesh Kumar

The top court had, while hearing a bunch of petitions challenging the SIR last week, asked the poll body to publish details of 65 lakh names deleted from the voter list with reasons for non-inclusion in a searchable format.

The CEC though maintained on Sunday that there was a difference between a machine-readable voter list and a searchable voter list.

"You can search the voter list available on the Election Commission website by entering the EPIC number. You can also download it. This is not called machine-readable."

He said that in 2019, the Supreme Court also studied this subject in depth and found that giving a machine-readable electoral roll could violate the privacy of the voter.

Opposition parties have been seeking machine-readable voter rolls from the EC.

The CEC did not directly reply to questions of how many foreign nationals, including Bangladeshis, were found during house-to-house enumeration in the Bihar SIR and how many people had till now submitted the required list of 11 documents as proof of their dates and places of birth.

Separately, he admitted that there could be errors in voter lists and knowingly or unknowingly some people ended up having multiple voter cards due to migration and other issues, he said, and the SIR would rectify it.

People of West Bengal want SIR, says State BJP chief

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

The West Bengal unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) stated on Sunday that the people of the State want a special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls, similar to the exercise currently under way in neighbouring Bihar.

The remark by the State BJP leadership came after Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said on Sunday that the three Election Commissioners would decide when the SIR exercise would be conducted in West Bengal and other States.

"People of West Bengal want SIR. If someone is scared, then it is their problem. People of West Bengal do not want West Bangladesh and another August 16 (Direct Action Day)," State BJP president Samik Bhattacharya said.

Assembly elections in West Bengal are scheduled for 2026.

LS to hold special debate on impact of Shubhanshu Shukla's space trip

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

After a near wash-out of the last four sittings of the Monsoon Session of Parliament as the Treasury benches rejected the Opposition's demand for a debate on the special intensive revision of electoral rolls in Bihar, the government has now listed a "special discussion on India's first astronaut aboard the International Space Station and the critical role of the space programme for a Viksit Bharat by 2047" on the Lok Sabha agenda for Monday.

The discussion has not been listed in the Rajya Sabha. Normally, before a special discussion is decided for either House, it is taken up at a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC). However, no BAC meeting was held last week.

The Opposition has not yet decided whether it will participate in this discussion. "We will take a call at the Monday morning meeting of the Opposition floor leaders," the Congress's Chief Whip in the Lok Sabha, Kodikunnil Suresh, told *The Hindu*.

Warm welcome: Delhi CM Rekha Gupta, along with Union Minister Jitendra Singh, receives Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla on his return to India at the airport in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

Astronaut Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla returned to India in the early hours of Sunday, after his visit to the International Space Station. Mr. Shukla is expected to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday. During his address at the 79th Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort on Friday, Prime Minister Modi said India was developing its own space station and highlighted Group Captain Shukla's return from a space mission.

"Our Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla has returned from the space station. In the coming days, he is returning to India," Mr. Modi had said.

INDIA bloc to hold talks on V-P election nominee

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Opposition INDIA bloc will meet on Monday to discuss its nominee for the Vice-Presidential elections, a day after the NDA announced its candidate on Sunday.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge will preside over a meeting of the parliamentary floor leaders of the INDIA bloc at 10.15 a.m., where the selection of the candidate is expected to be discussed.

A senior Congress leader told *The Hindu* that they would reach out to senior Opposition leaders over the phone to build consensus around a candidate.

"We may decide on the name either tomorrow evening or Tuesday," the Congress leader said.

Asked if the candidate would be from the Congress, he said, "We have not decided on that, but we want the candidate to be a consensus choice."

NCP(SP) slams Modi for not taking Nehru's name in I-Day speech

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's failure to mention the country's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in his Independence Day speech was "disturbing", according to veteran Maharashtra politician and Rajya Sabha member Sharad Pawar, who heads his own faction of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

"I heard the Prime Minister's speech from the Red Fort. It was very disturbing that he did not mention Nehru in his entire speech... Nehru gave important years of his youth to the freedom struggle of India. After Independence, he led the country and spread the message of peace worldwide. Even after his immense contribution, his name was not taken by the Prime Minister, which was unfortunate," the NCP(SP) leader said during an event in Pune.

On the Opposition protest against the Election Commission, Mr. Pawar said, "The present situation of politics is challenging. It has been 14 days that Parliament session is going on, but the House has not functioned even for a day. We sign and enter Parliament only to witness it getting adjourned after a ruckus. It is not a healthy sign for democracy."

> We sign and enter Parliament only to witness it getting adjourned after a ruckus. It is not a healthy sign for democracy
>
> **SHARAD PAWAR**
> NCP(SP) chief

He added that this was the first time 300 MPs had come together for a peaceful protest. "It included [Congress leaders] Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and members from other parties as well, but we were detained and taken to the police station. The fight is to save democracy. If those in the government do not find it important, then we, as Opposition, will have to keep raising our voice," he said.

Bill to decriminalise minor offences to be introduced in the Lok Sabha on Monday

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Jan Vishwas (Amendment) Bill, 2025, to decriminalise certain minor offences to promote ease of living and business, will be introduced by Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

According to the list of business posted on the Lok Sabha website, the Minister will introduce the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025, "to amend certain enactments for decriminalising and rationalising offences to further enhance trust-based governance for ease of living and doing business". Over 350 provisions are proposed to be amended through the Bill.

The legislation is part of the government's effort to improve the country's business climate.

Piyush Goyal

Earlier, in 2023, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment to Provisions) Act was enacted, which decriminalised 183 provisions in 42 Central Acts administered by 19 Ministries and departments.

Through the Act, the government removed imprisonment and/or fines in some provisions. Imprisonment was removed and fine was retained in a few rules, while in some cases imprisonment and fine were converted to a penalty.

"There are laws in our country, astonishing as it may sound, that provide for imprisonment over trivial matters, and no one ever paid attention to them," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his Independence Day speech on August 15.

"I have taken it upon myself to ensure that such unnecessary laws, which place Indian citizens behind bars, are abolished. We had introduced a Bill in Parliament earlier; we have brought it again this time," he noted.

The government earlier abolished more than 40,000 compliances deemed unnecessary. It has also scrapped over 1,500 obsolete laws.

"We have gone to Parliament to amend dozens of laws to simplify them, always placing the interests of the public first," Mr. Modi said.

'Simultaneous polls Bill gives EC unfettered discretion'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna has told a parliamentary committee scrutinising the simultaneous election Bill that the constitutional validity of a proposal in no way amounts to a pronouncement upon the desirability or necessity of its provisions.

In his written opinion to the committee, Justice Khanna, however, said arguments related to the dilution of the country's federal structure might be raised about the constitutional amendment Bill, as he listed the various claims made supporting and criticising the concept, sources said.

Most experts addressing the committee have rejected the charge that the proposals are unconstitutional, but issued concerns with certain provisions.

Justice Khanna said the Bill conferred "unfettered discretion" on the EC in deciding that an Assembly poll could not be conducted along with that of the Lok Sabha.

Justice Khanna said there was a difference between "merit review" and "judicial review". When the SC or HCs uphold constitutional validity, it was a mere affirmation that the amendment was not violative of the constitutional limitations, he said.

"The court decisions in no way amount to pronouncement upon the desirability of such provisions," he added.

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TENDER NOTICE

The **APTRANSCO** invites on-line bids for Spec No.PMM23-e-21/2025 for "Supply of 24 Nos. 50MVA 132/33kV PTRS (Lot-1-:12Nos. Lot-2- 12Nos.) for utilization of Augmentation & Construction works in various substations of **APTRANSCO**. Date and time of availability of tender **18.08.2025** by **17:00** Hrs. Further details can be seen in website(s):**www.eprocurement.gov.in** For further details Contact No:**9491030732**

DIPR 4334PP/CL, Dt.14-08-2025 Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER / TRANSMISSION

Government of Tamil Nadu
Labour Welfare & Skill Development Department
Commissionerate of Labour

Open Tender - NOTICE

Tender is invited by the Secretary, Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Welfare Board, towards the selection of Agency for conducting the Survey on Interstate Migrant Workers in Tamil Nadu.

The Tender document can be downloaded at free of cost from **https://tntenders.gov.in 18.08.2025.**

Last date and time for online submission of Tender through **https://tntenders.gov.in** is **17.09.2025** till **15:30 hrs**.

Queries if any will be addressed through email : **tncoltenders@gmail.com**. Kindly refer to the Tender document for instructions and information.

The Secretary
Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Welfare Board,
Nungambakkam, Chennai - 34.

DIPR/4416/TENDER/2025

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Date : 18/08/2025 **DIRECTOR**

INBRIEF

Northeast Frontier Railway shifts to bio-plastic on trains

The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has become India's first railway zone to shift to compostable bio-plastic on trains. As a pilot initiative, the NFR introduced a biodegradable bag to distribute linen to passengers on Friday, coinciding with the 79th Independence Day. The ISO 17088-compliant bioplastic used as the packaging material was developed at the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati. Kapinjal Kishore Sharma, NFR spokesperson, stated the project involves distributing 40,000 bioplastic bags across 25 trains originating from the railway zone's terminals in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Tripura, and West Bengal.

Masked men open fire at YouTuber Elvish's house

Two men fired over two dozen rounds outside YouTuber Elvish Yadav's residence in Gurugram on Sunday, the police said. The bullets struck the ground and first floors of the house but no one was injured, the police added. Mr. Yadav was not at home when the incident happened around 5.30 a.m. CCTV visuals showed two bike-borne masked men arriving at the scene and opening fire. The police collected forensic evidence and was scanning CCTV footage from the area. Meanwhile, a 'Bhau gang' has claimed responsibility for the firing. A senior police officer said that a probe was under way. PTI

Allies were taken on board to pick V-P nominee, says Nadda

A two-time former MP from T.N., Radhakrishnan is known for his ability to reach across party lines; he had also headed the State BJP unit; PM says the Maharashtra Governor has distinguished himself with his 'dedication, humility and intellect'

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

Maharashtra Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan was chosen as the National Democratic Alliance's Vice-Presidential candidate, after a meeting of the BJP Parliamentary Board on Sunday.

BJP national president and Union Minister J.P. Nadda, who made the announcement, added that NDA allies, who had earlier entrusted the decision of the candidacy with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mr. Nadda, were on board.

Mr. Radhakrishnan, 68, is a two-time former MP from Coimbatore and former Tamil Nadu BJP chief. "We will also be reaching out to the Opposition soon on this matter," Mr. Nadda added. The election was necessitated by former Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation from his post citing health issues. His relationship with the NDA government had come under a cloud as well.

It was said that the BJP leadership was keen on picking a "party person" with firm ideological alignment to the party and the alliance, who could also reach across the aisle as Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha.

Temple visit: C.P. Radhakrishnan and wife Sumathi offer prayers at Siddhivinayak Mandir in Mumbai on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Under attack from the Opposition over "imposition of Hindi" and facing a tough election in Tamil Nadu next year, the BJP seemed to have hit several birds with one stone.

In Mr. Radhakrishnan, the BJP seems to have found the various characteristics that had been required. Born in Tamil Nadu's Tiruppur district on October 20, 1957, Mr. Radhakrishnan had joined the Jan Sangh, the earlier avatar of the BJP, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh while in his teens.

Electoral break

His big break came in 1998, when as the BJP candidate in an alliance headed by the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), he was elected to the Lok Sabha from Coimbatore in the wake of the serial bomb blasts in the textile city during electioneering by L.K. Advani. In 1999, he was elected again from the seat, this time with the backing of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). He had also led the Tamil Nadu BJP unit from 2003 to 2006.

Affable leader

Dubbed the "Vajpayee of Coimbatore" locally, Mr. Radhakrishnan has been known for his affable nature and ability to reach across party lines, a skill he will need to call upon in his role as Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha. He was appointed the Governor of Jharkhand in 2023, where he served till July 2024, and was given additional charge of Telangana and Puducherry till July 2024. He was later appointed Governor of Maharashtra in July 2024, where he serves till date.

The Electoral College for electing the Vice-President of India consists of MPs of both Houses, where the NDA is in a comfortable position in terms of numbers.

Posting on X, Mr. Modi said, "In his long years in public life, Thiru CP Radhakrishnan Ji has distinguished himself with his dedication, humility and intellect. During the various positions he has held, he has always focused on community service and empowering the marginalised."

Conveying his thanks to Mr. Modi and other leaders, Mr. Radhakrishnan posted: "I am moved and touched beyond words for the confidence they have in me and giving me the opportunity to serve the Nation. I assure to work hard for the Nation until my last breath. Jai Hind!"

It remains to be seen if Tamil Nadu's ruling party, the DMK, and its allies would oppose his candidature. If elected, Mr. Radhakrishnan will be the second person from Tamil Nadu to occupy the post of Vice-President after 38 years. R. Venkataraman was Vice-President between 1984 and 1987. Thereafter, he was elected President.

After the official announcement, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis visited the Governor at Raj Bhavan and conveyed his wishes.

(With inputs from T.N. bureau)

Two held with ₹2.97-cr. worth 'whale vomit' in Ahmedabad

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

The Ahmedabad Rural Special Operations Group (SOG) on Sunday seized 2.97 kg of ambergris, commonly known as sperm whale vomit, worth nearly ₹2.97 crore in the international market, and arrested two people in a raid near Sarkhej-Sanand Highway.

Acting on a tip-off, the SOG intercepted two suspects near Gibpura village and recovered 2.976 kg of ambergris, said Om Prakash Jat, Superintendent of Police, Ahmedabad Rural.

The seized material, confirmed by forest officials and forensic experts, is estimated to be worth ₹2.97 crore, he said. Along with the ambergris, two mobile phones and ₹700 in cash were also confiscated from the accused.

During interrogation, they revealed that the ambergris had been supplied by Bharatbhai Vallabhbhai Sarvaiya of Bhavnagar and they were looking for buyers due to its high market demand, Mr. Jat said.

The accused have been handed over to the Forest Department, which has initiated legal proceedings against them under the Wildlife Protection Act.

309 families evicted from grazing reserve in Assam

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The authorities in northeastern Assam's Biswanath district evicted 309 families from a village grazing reserve (VGR) on Sunday.

Officials in the district said some 600 security personnel, 20 excavators, and 10 bulldozers were deployed to clear 175 *bighas*, or 23 hectares, of land in the Japariguri VGR from encroachment.

District Commissioner Simanta Kumar Das said many families dismantled their houses and left after receiving notices on August 1 to vacate within 15 days. "The remaining structures, including a tea garden, were demolished," he said.

Mostly Muslims

The encroachers, officials said, were mostly Bengali-speaking Muslims.

While organisations of indigenous communities have backed such eviction drives, the All-Assam Minority Students' Union said the Biswanath exercise was carried out inhumanely and demanded a pause until the government ensures rehabilitation of the people targeted.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has vowed to continue such eviction drives.

In his Independence Day speech, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma vowed to continue such eviction drives to free forestlands, grazing lands, and government revenue lands from encroachers of "doubtful citizenship". He also warned the indigenous communities about a future where they will be at the mercy of "strangers" unless they defend their cultural identity.

'Hate propaganda'

Assam MLA and All-India United Democratic Front general secretary Rafiqul Islam criticised the Chief Minister for defaming Muslims.

He also said the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Assam government had been systematically keeping Muslim officers away from key positions.

Terming the Chief Minister's Independence Day speech as "hate-driven propaganda" to polarise the people on religious lines, he told agencies that the BJP-led government had consciously not appointed any Muslim as the District Commissioner or Superintendent of Police, although there were several Muslim IAS and IPS officers in Assam.

Grassland invaders stifle Assam's island-like national park home to feral horses: study

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

A new study has identified at least two native plants that have joined invasive species to alter the riverine ecosystem of eastern Assam's Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (DSNP), the only habitat of feral horses in India.

These species have added to the changes in the grassland-dominated DSNP landscape, largely attributed to the recurring Brahmaputra river floods and increasing anthropogenic pressures from villages located within its boundaries, the study said.

The native "grassland invaders" are *Bombax ceiba* and *Lagerstroemia speciosa* – flowering trees known as *Simalu* and *Ajar* in Assamese. Their impact on the local vegetation has been as worrying as that of the invasive species, which include shrubs *Chromolaena odorata* and *Ageratum conyzoides*, herb *Parthenium hysterophorous* and climber *Mikania micrantha*.

Unwelcome guests: Native and invasive plant species are changing the riverine ecosystem of the national park. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The study titled *Grasslands in Flux*, analysing the land use and land cover (LULC) changes in Dibru-Saikhowa from its designation as a national park in 1999 through 2024, was published in the latest issue of *Earth*, an international, peer-reviewed journal on earth science.

The researchers used remote sensing and geographic information systems to analyse the LULC changes in DSNP, an island-like formation between the Brahmaputra to the north and the Dibru river to the south.

According to their study, grasslands covered 28.78% of the 425 sq. km DSNP in 2000, followed by semi-evergreen forests (25.58%). By 2013, shrubland became the most prominent class (81.31 sq. km), and degraded forest expanded to 75.56 sq. km.

"During this period, substantial areas of grassland [29.94 sq. km], degraded forest [10.87 sq. km], semi-evergreen forest [12.33 sq. km], and bare land [10.50 sq. km] were converted to shrubland. In 2024, degraded forest further increased, covering 80.52 sq. km [23.47%]," the study said.

This change was the outcome of the conversion of 11.46 sq. km of shrubland and 27.48 sq. km of semi-evergreen forest into degraded forest, indicating a substantial and consistent decline in grassland, the study noted. Forest degradation can lead to loss of biodiversity, threaten the survival of local fauna, and reduce carbon storage, potentially intensifying climate change.

The study stated that the changes in the "natural structure and function" of the DSNP landscape pose a serious threat to the survival of grassland-obligate faunal species, many of which are already globally threatened due to ongoing habitat loss.

"The concern is heightened by the fact that numerous species are endemic to the grasslands found in the floodplains of this region. Notable species which are rapidly decreasing include the Bengal florican [*Houbaropsis bengalensis*], hog deer [*Axis porcinus*], and swamp grass babbler [*Prinia cinerascens*]," the study said.

The DNSP is also home to some 200 feral horses, which are descendants of military horses abandoned during World War 2.

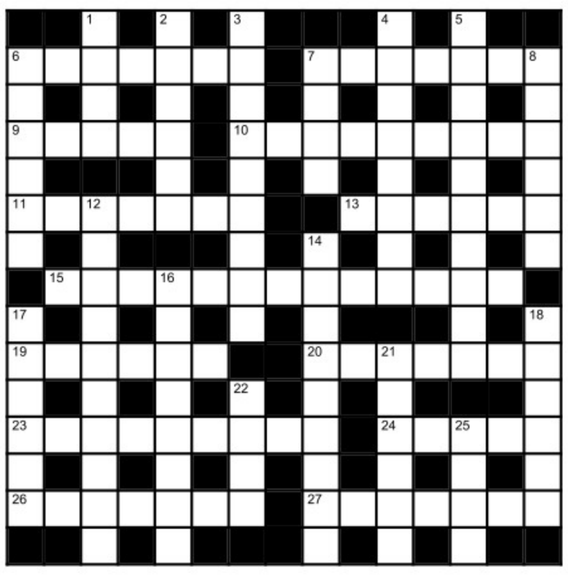
The study recommended a targeted grassland recovery project that would encompass the control of invasive species, improved surveillance, increased staffing, and the relocation of forest villages and support community-based conservation efforts.

TH CROSSWORD + 14566

(set by Afterdark)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

6 Set up home on land (7)
7 Setback on tour, second on second test (7)
9 Receiver on training? Yes, internal (5)
10 English stall fight (9)
11 Stew! Laughs raucously after taking a round (7)
13 Reside divinely without limits for a change (4,2)
15 Property I have on headland is on use (13)
19 Accord with company and US university on the last day (6)
20 New series? At last you dug into a copy (7)
23 Heartless hatred & hard? No, it's a show (9)
24 Letters from Putin trolling presentation (5)
26 Handheld device has limitless alphabets; it's a mess (7)
27 England on both sides of borders, concealing (7)

Down

1 Pale like gutted hubby (4)
2 Arrived with artist and snapper,say (6)
3 Type of lens used by predecessor (9)
4 Replacing one by one, suggestion that it's a mirage (8)
5 Hope oats is cooked well and becomes an ideal example (10)
6 Challenge imperfect undergraduate on numbers (6)
7 Energetic orchestra? Cynical nearly (4)
8 Mistake with commission (6)
12 Angry unfair mail, that's strange (10)
14 Always immature to pine, say (9)
16 Inside president angled with a knot (8)
17 Cats runs around having drink and misbehaves (4,2)
18 Request individual? Go away (6)
21 I primarily contracted lice infection leading to cold spike (6)
22 Ball placed in carpet is in wide ditch (4)
25 Record a form of dance (European) (4)

SUDOKU

	4					8		
	8	9	4		2		7	
			9					4
6				2			3	1
8		5		1		6		9
4	1			6				8
3					8			
	7		6		1	2	8	
		8					6	

No.SS6615 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

4	8	6	9	5	1	3	7	2
7	2	5	3	4	8	9	1	6
1	9	3	2	6	7	5	8	4
9	6	8	4	1	5	7	2	3
3	1	4	6	7	2	8	5	9
2	5	7	8	3	9	4	6	1
6	7	2	5	9	3	1	4	8
5	4	9	1	8	6	2	3	7
8	3	1	7	2	4	6	9	5

FAITH

Gugga Naumi festival

Gugga Naumi is a popular folk religious festival celebrated across Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and other parts of north India. Gugga Naumi reflects the syncratic and fluid traditions of India where Gugga is worshipped by people of different religions and sects, said Prof. Kumool Abbi. It also shows the hold of popular religious practices over institutionalised religion.

Gugga Naumi is observed on the ninth day of Krishna Paksha in the Bhadrapad month according to the Amavasyath calendar. Usually the day is observed after Janmashtami.

The celebration of Gugga Naumi begins on the Rakhi and continues for nine days, commencing with pilgrimages to Gugga Medi village in Hanumangarh district of Rajasthan. The Garudas (snake charmers and poison suckers) carry the *Chahad* (standard) of Guggapir to Hanumangarh. Devotional songs called *Pir Ke Sole* are sung by the Gugga Mandis; prayers and fairs take place in Gugga shrines, called Marhis, dotted across the villages in north India, reflecting Gugga's affinity with the subalterns.

Gugga, venerated Guaaji by the Hindus and Guggapir or Gugga zahir Pir by Muslims, was a Rajput prince, the son of King Jewar and Queen Bacchan of the Agni vamsa lineage of the Chauhan clan of Rajputs. He is shown riding a blue horse and holds blue and yellow flags. He is believed to posses divine powers to control poisonous snakes. He is specially worshipped for the protective and healing powers by mothers who pray to him for the well being of their children and seek cures for the ailments, while barren women seek the boon of an offspring.

Upgrading credit card

Rohit Chhibbar

As your income, spending habits and lifestyle changes, the existing credit card may not suit current needs and requirements. In such situations, a credit card upgrade could be helpful.

Upgrading means switching to another credit card, usually a higher variant, from existing card provider. This would earn higher rewards and better benefits and sometimes even higher credit limits, which would help maximise savings while maintaining current lifestyle. You can consider an upgrade in the following situations:

Eligible for better cards

While entry-level card can be a good option for beginners, they come with a low reward rate and usually lack additional perks like lounge access, milestone benefit, movie benefit, etc. Hence, it is important to review spending patterns every few months and check for upgrade offers from bank. If you have a strong credit history and excellent repayment record, your card issuer may extend a card upgrade, often with lifetime-free or first year free offers, additional joining bonus, or welcome vouchers, which can help you maximise savings. In such cases, upgrading would be a smarter choice. However, ensure the benefits on existing card align with your current lifestyle.

Higher value-back on spends

If your card spending has increased and the existing card only comes with a basic reward rate, you may not be able to maximise savings. Upgrading to a card with a better reward rate, especially in your preferred spending categories, could enhance savings.

For instance, you have SBI Simply Click Credit Card with accelerated rewards on select online brands but, with time, your income and expenses have increased and you find yourself spending a considerable amount online, with a majority of it being beyond the select few brands. Here, upgrading to Cashback SBI Card could help you get much higher savings on all online spends, as there are no merchant restrictions.

Category-focused benefits

Spending habits change with time as you grow financially. If monthly expenses have grown, especially in a particular category like travel, shopping or dining, upgrading to a card with more category-focused benefits could help you save more.

For example, someone using an entry-level card like Axis My Zone can consider upgrading to Axis Horizon or Axis Atlas for travel-centric benefits. These give stronger value-back on travel spends with option to transfer accumulated points to popular airlines and hotels. Enhanced perks around lounge access, milestone benefits, forex markup fee, etc. can also be a good add-on for travellers.

Higher credit limit

As income grows over time, you need a higher credit limit to manage increasing expenses. If you continue with your existing credit limit and max out your credit card frequently, it can affect your credit score. Moreover, a consistently high credit utilisation ratio shows you are overly dependent on credit which could make lenders apprehensive of extending more credit to you. Upgrading to a credit card that aligns better with current needs and offers a higher credit limit can offer you a well-rounded solution. However, note a card upgrade does not guarantee a limit increase, so it is essential to confirm this with the card provider before opting.

Cash flow management

At the time of upgrading, you can also change credit card billing cycle. This will help manage cash flow easily by aligning billing cycle as per monthly expenses. For instance, if you are a salaried person and existing card's due date falls at the end of the month, you can change the cycle so that the bill is due at the beginning of the month, which would make it easier to manage monthly cash flow.

Before an upgrade, review overall card benefits, fee, charges and other terms and conditions to ensure it matches current lifestyle and helps maximise savings. Right upgrade at right time can help save significantly without affecting financial goals.

(The writer is chief business officer, credit cards, Paisabazaar)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

Clear picture: Understanding the educational capacity of son/daughter is a must for edcuation expense plannning.

How to plan for 10X rise in education expenses

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for taking investment decisions. Yet, some are universally applicable and financial experts consider them the thumb rules for attaining the target

FOOTING BILL

Vaishali R. Venkat

Amid uncertainties of life, lie some certainties. For instance, children growing up, school education expenses, rising cost of higher education, career goals of children, etc. Above all, it is certain the money required for education today would leapfrog at least tenfold by the time children enroll in higher education. So, is it possible to meet the 10X rise in education expenditure in the future?

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for investment decisions. Yet, some are universally applicable and financial experts consider them the golden rules. Let's dive into details.

Career goals

First and foremost, understanding the career goals of children plays a major role in planning. For instance, if your son/daughter wishes to study abroad, you might have to earmark more money for meeting the educational expenses. If they do not want to go abroad, your actual educational expenditure might be comparatively less.

Moreover, the courses they are interested in also play a major role. Not all courses are costly. If they are really interested in courses that are less competitive and relatively cheaper, you are relieved to some extent. However, the decision must be purely based on their wish not on financial condition.

> Investment portfolio must have a combination of fixed/recurring deposits (emergency fund), mutual funds, gold and stocks

Next, understanding the educational capacity of your son/daughter is essential. If they are good at studies, you might expect some scholarships or fee waivers. If not, the expenditure would be more.

Financial investigation

You must understand your current financial position. A thorough, honest analysis of income, expenditure, debt, luxury and lifestyle habits, risk appetite, savings, investments, short-term and long-term goals, dependents (not just children but also aged parents) and the presence/absence of family-support system must be made.

Luxury and lifestyle habits play a spoilsport in savings and investments. The two are inversely related. The more you spend on luxury, the less you save or invest.

You should clearly zero-in on a target; that is, to which level would you want to reach regarding the above variables. Often, quantification of the above variables to the approximate levels is beneficial. For instance, let's say the current savings is ₹1,000 a month and your target savings is ₹10,000 per month.

> To avoid touching savings or investments, in times of emergencies, you must be well protected by various kinds of insurance policies

Next, analyse the gaps from where you are, to where you want to be, again quantification helps. In this case, ₹9,000 a month is the gap between the current and the target level. You should also figure out the time available for reaching the target, say how many years you have in between.

Budgeting exercise

The moment you realise there are gaps and aware of the time available, start budgeting. Cut down on lifestyle expenses and expenses on instant gratification. Know the difference between needs and desires and far as possible, spend on needs, not desires.

Start early

The key solution to attaining the target is to start early. Only then can you enjoy the magic power of compounding. Say, if you start when your child is just two or three years old, you are giving money ample time to grow and when it multiplies, goal attainment is easier. In contrast, if you start when your son/daughter is in Class IX or X, you are losing the potential power of compounding and on top of it you must save more money per month for attaining your target.

Educate your child

Teach your child about the importance of cutting down on expenses, money, savings, investments, education, financial discipline and financial responsibility.

Insurance coverage

The first expenditure towards securing your future must be insurance policies. To avoid touching savings or investments, in times of emergencies, you must be well protected by all kinds of insurance policies. Say, a term policy for at least ₹1 crore; family-floater health insurance policy for at least ₹10-₹25 lakh; if you have own house, buy a Bharat Griha Raksha policy with the sum insured covering property value.

Risks/rewards

Do not put all eggs in one basket. Your investment portfolio must have a combination of fixed/recurring deposits (emergency fund), mutual funds, gold and stocks. If you have 8-10 ten years for your goal, invest a portion of savings in equities. Though equities might be highly risky if less than five to seven years, they have the potential to give inflation-beating returns if invested for more than 10 years or so.

(The writer is an NISM & CRISIL-certified Wealth Manager and certified in NISM's Research Analyst module)

When popularity is not really good

THINKINVESTOR

A fund that shows significant increase in net asset value (NAV) growth compared with its stated benchmark is a fund that you must further analyse for potential investment.

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

As investors, we typically want to earn above-average returns. That, perhaps, explains why most of us invest in active funds – funds mandated to beat benchmark index (generate alpha). But choosing an active fund is not the same as choosing consumer product.

We cannot simply choose a fund with large assets under management (AUM), believing that more individuals choosing a fund or more money flowing into a fund is good. Here, we discuss how you should consider the growth in AUM at a unit level as the first step in choosing an active fund.

AUM growth

A fund's AUM can increase for two reasons. The fund's portfolio may have accumulated gains. The fund manager could have sold stocks at higher prices and realised the gains. In addition, the fund could carry gains that are yet to be realised. Increase in AUM because of gains bodes well for the unit holders. Then, there is fresh inflow of capital from existing unit holders and new investors.

This may not always be good for unit holders. Why?

Typically, a fund manager will have a rule (referred to as alpha strategy) to pick stocks from the fund's investable universe. Best practice indicates the investable universe ought to be a fund's benchmark index. In India, a large-cap fund's investable universe can extend beyond large-cap stocks. SEBI definition states large-cap funds must invest not less than 80% in large-cap stocks. This allows such funds to invest not more than 20% in, say, mid-caps.

A crucial characteristic of an alpha strategy is it is not always scalable. That means a strategy that works well on, say, an AUM of ₹10,000 crore may not necessarily work when the AUM increases to ₹25,000 crore.

Conclusion

It is difficult to determine how much of the growth in AUM can be attributable to gains and how much of it to fresh inflow of capital. So, it is best to evaluate the growth in NAV over multiple periods. Why?

Fresh capital into the fund will increase the numerator in the form of cash and the denominator in the form of units in the NAV calculation. Note that NAV is market value of the fund's portfolio (including fresh inflows) divided by number of units.

A fund that shows a significant increase in NAV growth compared with its stated benchmark is a fund that you must further analyse for potential investment.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
HDFC Bank	10.90-24.00	10,846-14,384	2,169-2,877	Up to Rs 6,500
Tata Capital	11.50 onwards	10,996 onwards	2,199 onwards	Up to 3.5%
State Bank of India	10.10-15.10	10,648-11,921	2,130-2,384	Up to 1.5% (Min. Rs 1,000; Max. Rs 15,000)
ICICI Bank	10.60 onwards	10,772 onwards	2,154 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda*	10.40-18.20	10,722-12,751	2,144-2,550	Up to 2% (Max. Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	9.99-22.00	10,621-13,809	2,124-2,762	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 5%
Bank of India	11.10-16.15	10,896-12,199	2,179-2,440	Up to 1% (Min. Rs 250; Max. Rs 15,000)
Canara Bank	9.95-15.40	10,611-12,000	2,122-2,400	Up to 0.25% (Max. Rs 2,500)
Punjab National Bank	10.50-17.05	10,747-12,440	2,149-2,488	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	10.15 onwards	10,660 onwards	2,132 onwards	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.99 onwards	11,120 onwards	2,224 onwards	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	10.35-14.45	10,710-11,751	2,142-2,350	Up to 1% (Max. Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	10.00-31.00	10,624-16,485	2,125-3,297	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	9.85-12.90	10,587-11,351	2,117-2,270	0.50%-1%
Indian Overseas Bank	10.50 onwards	10,747 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 0.75%
UCO Bank	10.20-13.45	10,673-11,492	2,135-2,298	Up to 1% (Min. Rs 750)
IDFC FIRST Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	2,124 onwards	2%
Bank of Maharashtra	9.00-13.80	10,379-11,582	2,076-2,316	Up to 1% (Max. Rs 10,000)
Central Bank of India	10.10-11.90	10,648-11,097	2,130-2,219	Up to 1%
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 3.5%

*Interest concession of 0.10% to customers opting for group credit life insurance.

Car Loans

Rates and Charges		Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years	(% of loan amount)
Name of Lender	**Interest Rate (%)**	**EMI (Rs)**	**Processing fee**
Union Bank of India	7.80-9.70	10,090 - 10,550	Up to Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	7.85-9.70	10,102 - 10,550	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	8.15-11.70	10,174 - 11,047	Up to Rs. 2,000
Bank of India	7.85-12.15	10,102 - 11,160	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 2,500 - Rs. 10,000)
UCO Bank	7.60-10.25	10,043 - 10,685	0.50% (Rs 5,000)
State Bank of India	8.90-9.95	10,355 - 10,611	Rs 750 - Rs 1,500
IDBI Bank	8.30-9.15	10,210 - 10,416	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	7.70-12.00	10,067 - 11,122	0.25% of loan (max. up to Rs. 15,000)
Indian Overseas Bank	7.80-12.00	10,090 - 11,122	0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000)
ICICI Bank	9.10 onwards	10,403 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	9.20 onwards	10,428 onwards	Up to 1% (Rs. 3,500 - Rs. 9,000)
Karnataka Bank	8.95-11.64	10,367 - 11,031	Up to 0.60% (Rs. 2,500 - Rs. 11,000)
Federal Bank	10.00 onwards	10,624 onwards	Rs. 2,000 - Rs. 4,500
Punjab and Sind Bank**	7.75-14.25	10,078 - 11,699	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
Indian Bank	7.75-9.85	10,078 - 10,587	Rs. 1,000
IDFC FIRST Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	Up to Rs. 10,000
Central Bank of India	7.85-9.45	10,102 - 10,489	0.50% of loan amount (Rs. 2,000 - Rs. 20,000)

*0.25% interest rate concession for existing home loan borrowers, other customers with 6 months of relationship with bank.
**Concession of up to 50% on processing fee for PSB Apna Vahan Sugam.

Rates and charges as on August 13 **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

JERUSALEM

Israel claims to have struck Houthi 'energy infra location' in Yemen

REUTERS

Israel said on Sunday that it struck an "energy infrastructure site" in Yemen used by the Houthi rebels, the latest action against the Iran-backed group. The Huthis' Al-Masirah TV, citing a civil defence source, reported "an aggression targeting the Haziz power station" south of Sanaa. There were no immediate reports of casualties. AFP

NEW YORK

Shooting at a crowded New York club leaves 3 dead, eight injured

AFP

A club shooting in the New York City borough of Brooklyn early on Sunday morning left three persons dead and eight others wounded in a year of record low gun violence in the city. Investigators believe a shooter, or shooters, opened fire with multiple weapons at the club in Crown Heights after "a dispute" just before 3:30 a.m. AP

BELGRADE

Serbia's President vows 'strong response' after days of unrest

AP

Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic on Sunday vowed a "strong" response to anti-government protests, after nearly a week of clashes involving his supporters, police and demonstrators. Clashes have erupted in the capital, Belgrade, and other cities for five nights in a row, with fireworks, stun grenades and tear gas used. AFP

LA PAZ

Polls open in Bolivia's presidential election dominated by the Right

AFP

Polls opened on Sunday in Bolivia's presidential and congressional elections marked by the absence of former leftist President Evo Morales — barred from running. Leading the race are conservatives Samuel Doria Medina, a business magnate, and Jorge Quiroga, a former President, but neither has more than 30% support. REUTERS

'Putin agreed to U.S., EU security guarantees for Ukraine at summit'

Special envoy Steve Witkoff says the U.S. could offer Article 5-like protection, one of the reasons Kyiv wants to be in NATO; he adds that Russia has promised to make a legislative commitment not to go after any additional territory in Ukraine

Associated Press
NEW YORK

Special U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff said on Sunday that Russian leader Vladimir Putin agreed at his summit with President Donald Trump to allow the U.S. and European allies to offer Ukraine a security guarantee resembling NATO's collective defence mandate as part of an eventual deal to end the three-and-a-half-year-long war.

"We were able to win the following concession: That the United States could offer Article 5-like protection, which is one of the real reasons why Ukraine wants to be in NATO," he said on *CNN*'s *State of the Union*. Mr. Witkoff said it was the first time he had heard Mr. Putin agree to that.

Baby steps: U.S. negotiators claim Vladimir Putin's robust security guarantees to be 'game-changing'. REUTERS

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, speaking at a news conference in Brussels with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said that "we welcome President Trump's willingness to contribute to Article 5-like security guarantees for Ukraine. and the 'Coalition of the willing' – including the European Union – is ready to do its share."

Mr. Witkoff, offering some of the first details of what was discussed at Friday's summit in Alaska, said the two sides agreed to "robust security guarantees that I would describe as game-changing." He added that Russia said that it would make a legislative commitment not to go after any additional territory in Ukraine.

Mr. Zelenskyy thanked the U.S. for recent signals that Washington is willing to support security guarantees for Ukraine, but said the details remained unclear.

Mr. Witkoff defended Mr. Trump's decision to abandon his push for Russia to agree to an immediate ceasefire, saying the President had pivoted toward a peace deal because so much progress was made.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio insisted there would be "additional consequences" as Mr. Trump warned before meeting with Mr. Putin, if they failed to reach a ceasefire. But Mr. Rubio noted that there wasn't going to be any sort of deal on a truce reached when Ukraine wasn't at the talks.

European leaders to join Zelenskyy at Trump meet

Reuters
LONDON/BERLIN

European leaders including from Germany, France and Britain, will accompany Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to meet Donald Trump in Washington, they said on Sunday, seeking to bolster him as the U.S. President presses Kyiv to accept a quick peace.

Ahead of the Washington talks on Monday, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer were hosting a meeting of allies on Sunday to shore up Mr. Zelenskyy's position.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will also travel to Washington, as will Finland's President Alexander Stubb. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who is an admirer of many of Mr. Trump's policies, will also go to Washington, her office said.

Emmanuel Macron at a video conference with Ursula van der Leyen and Volodymyr Zelenskyy in France on Sunday. REUTERS

European allies are keen to avoid a repeat of Mr. Zelenskyy's last Oval Office meeting, in February. That went disastrously, with Mr. Trump and Vice-President J.D. Vance giving the Ukrainian leader a strong public dressing-down.

"The talks will address, among other things, security guarantees, territorial issues, and continued support for Ukraine in its defence against Russian aggression," the German government said about the Washington trip.

Protesters clash with police in Israel over Gaza hostage deal

Associated Press
JERUSALEM

Israeli police blasted crowds with water cannons and made dozens of arrests on Sunday as thousands of protesters demanding a deal to free hostages in Gaza aimed to shut down the country with a one-day strike that blocked roads and closed businesses.

Groups representing families of hostages organised the demonstrations as frustration grows over plans for a new military offensive in some of Gaza's most populated areas, which many fear could endanger the remaining hostages. Fifty hostages remain, and 20 of them are believed to still be alive. "We don't win a war over the bodies of hostages," protesters chanted in one of the largest and fiercest protests in 22 months of war. Even some former Israeli Army and intelligence chiefs now call for a deal to end the fighting.

Out of control: Israeli police clash with protesters in Tel Aviv after they had called for a nationwide strike on Sunday. REUTERS

Protesters gathered at dozens of places including outside politicians' homes, military headquarters and on major highways. They blocked lanes and lit bonfires. Police said they arrested 38 people.

One protester carried a photo of an emaciated Palestinian child from Gaza. Such images were once rare at Israeli demonstrations but now appear more often as outrage grows over conditions there for civilians after more than 250 malnutrition-related deaths.

At least 18 killed in Israeli strikes across Gaza Strip

Agence France-Presse
GAZA CITY

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli strikes and gunfire killed at least 18 Palestinians on Sunday, including seven persons shot dead while waiting to collect food aid.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal said seven persons were killed in an Israeli drone strike that hit a hospital courtyard in Gaza City, in the territory's north.

Witnesses said the victims were members of a Hamas unit.

There was no comment from the Israeli military, which is preparing a broader offensive in Gaza City and has sent ground forces to the city's Zeitun neighbourhood in recent days.

Unification of Syria cannot happen at the cost of blood, says Sharaa as he slams Israel

Agence France-Presse
DAMASCUS

Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa [Muhammad al-Jolani] has said the battle to unify his country after years of civil war "should not be with blood", rejecting any partition and accusing Israel of meddling in the south.

His remarks, released by state TV on Sunday, came as hundreds demonstrated in south Syria's Sweida province, denouncing sectarian violence last month and calling for the right to self-determination for the Druze-majority province.

Syria's Sweida province saw clashes in July involving Druze fighters, Sunni Bedouin, government forces and Israeli troops. REUTERS

"We still have another battle ahead of us to unify Syria, and it should not be with blood and military force... it should be through some kind of understanding because Syria is tired of war," Sharaa said.

"Some parties seek to gain power through regional power, Israel or others. This cannot be implemented," he said.

A week of bloodshed in Sweida began on July 13 with clashes between Druze fighters and Sunni Bedouin, but rapidly escalated, drawing in government forces, with Israel also carrying out strikes. Syrian officials said their forces intervened to stop the clashes, but witnesses, Druze factions and the a rights group have accused them of siding with the Bedouin and committing abuses against the Druze, including summary executions.

PURPLE PATCH

Neeraj qualifies for Diamond League Final in Zurich

FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Neeraj Chopra has qualified for Diamond League 2025 Final in Zurich, scheduled to be held on August 27 and 28. The Indian ace has booked his berth as per the latest standings released after the Silesia leg. With 15 points from two DL meetings, from one title and one second-place finish, Neeraj entered the winner-takes-all finale.

INSPIRATIONAL

Gambhir transferred the fighting spirit to us, reveals Shardul

PTI

Shardul Thakur praised head coach Gautam Gambhir for transferring the fighting spirit to the squad. "We have seen him willing to fight for the team, and transfer that energy to us," Shardul told *Revsportz*. "Criticism will come and go, but I believe we are heading in the right direction," Shardul noted.

UPGRADE NECESSARY

Babar has been asked to improve his T20 batting: coach Hesson

GETTY IMAGES

Pakistan head coach Mike Hesson opened up about Babar Azam not being selected for the Asia Cup squad. "There's no doubt Babar's been asked to improve in some areas around taking on spin and in terms of his strike-rate. A player like Babar has an opportunity to play in the BBL and show he's improving in those areas in T20s".

LEADER OF THE PACK

Marc Marquez wins Austrian MotoGP, extends c'ship lead

AFP

Ducati's Marc Marquez chalked up his ninth win of the season at the Austrian MotoGP at the Red Bull Ring on Sunday to stretch his lead at the head of the championship standings. Ducati rookie Fermin Aldeguer closed on him in the final laps but had to settle for second, with Aprilia's Marco Bezzecchi completing the podium.

Shreyas and Jitesh likely to be back for Asia Cup

Selectors have to take a call on whether to include Bumrah or pick Prasidh; Gill, Jaiswal not expected to be part of the T20I set-up; fit-again Suryakumar to attend Tuesday's meeting

CRICKET

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Shreyas Iyer and Jitesh Sharma are likely to earn a recall to India's T20I set-up when the senior national men's selection panel meets on Tuesday to finalise the squad for the Asia Cup to be held in the UAE from September 9.

Neither Shreyas nor Jitesh has featured in T20Is since Gautam Gambhir took over as head coach in July 2024. Shreyas last played a T20I in December 2023, while Jitesh – the wicketkeeper-batter – made his final appearance in January 2024.

Tough decision

The Hindu understands the selectors and team management are aligned on including an experienced middle-order batter suited to the slower, lower conditions expected in the UAE. If Shreyas is picked, it could mean a tough call on either Shivam Dube or Rinku Singh, both of whom were part of India's squad for its last T20I assignment against England in January-February.

Back in the reckoning: Shreyas and Jitesh are all set to earn a recall to the T20I squad following a splendid IPL 2025 campaign for PBKS and RCB, respectively. FILE PHOTOS: R.V. MOORTHY, VIJAY SONEJI

Jitesh, who played a key role in Royal Challengers Bengaluru's maiden IPL title, is expected to replace Dhruv Jurel, who was the reserve stumper to Sanju Samson during the England series.

The selectors must also decide whether to include Jasprit Bumrah in the T20I squad. With Mohammed Shami unavailable, a pacer's slot is open. The debate could be whether to bring back Bumrah or give Prasidh Krishna a chance after a strong IPL campaign.

Captain Suryakumar Yadav, who has recovered from sports hernia, will attend the selection meeting. His input will be vital as the selectors plan for the T20 World Cup to be held in India next year.

There has been speculation about the return of Shubman Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal to the T20I squad. However, the management appears inclined to stick with the core group that has excelled under Gambhir, winning 13 of 15 T20Is since his appointment.

Additionally, with minimal turnaround time between formats – the Asia Cup final is on September 28 and the first Test against the West Indies begins on October 2 in Ahmedabad – the selectors are likely to keep Gill and Jaiswal fresh for the red-ball assignments.

Pakistan leaves out Babar, Rizwan from T20I squad

Press Trust of India
LAHORE

Pakistan on Sunday left out seasoned batters Babar Azam and Mohammed Rizwan while announcing a 17-member squad for Asia Cup and the preceding tri-series in the UAE later this month.

Babar and Rizwan have been away from T20Is for a while. Both Babar and Rizwan made their last appearance in the shortest format in December, 2024.

In the lead-up to the Asia Cup which will be played in T20 format in the UAE from September 9, the Salman Ali Agha-led side will play a tri-series against Afghanistan and the UAE at Sharjah from August 29 to September 7.

The squad features senior fast bowler Shaheen Afridi, Mohammed Wasim and left-arm bowler Salman Mirza.

Big challenge: Salman will lead Pakistan in the continental showpiece. AP

Coach Mike Hesson said the players in the current squad, which recently lost an away ODI series to West Indies after losing to Bangladesh in an away T20I series, have been doing well.

Pakistan is placed along with India in Group-A, also featuring the UAE and Oman, in the eight-team Asia Cup, which will conclude on September 28.

Pakistan squad:

Salman Ali Agha (Capt.), Abrar Ahmed, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Hasan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Haris (wk), Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Waseem Jnr, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Salman Mirza, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufyan Moqim.

Arsenal walks away with a win at Old Trafford

Staying alert: Calafiori capitalised on goalkeeper Bayindir's mistake. REUTERS

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
MANCHESTER

Arsenal's quest for Premier League glory got off to a winning start as Riccardo Calafiori's goal beat Manchester United 1-0 on Sunday, while world champion Chelsea was lucky to escape with a 0-0 draw against Crystal Palace.

The Gunners were far from impressive at Old Trafford but earned a huge three points thanks to a glaring error from United's stand-in goalkeeper Altay Bayindir.

The Turkish international flapped at Declan Rice's corner on 13 minutes, presenting Calafiori with the simple task of heading into an empty net.

United gave debuts to all of its new £200 million attacking trident of Matheus Cunha, Bryan Mbeumo and Benjamin Sesko, but could not find a way past the Premier League's best defence for the past two seasons.

Patrick Dorgu came closest to an equaliser when the Dane smashed against the post from long range. It was a tale of the two goalkeepers as Arsenal stopper David Raya also produced fine saves to deny Cunha and Mbeumo a perfect start to their United careers.

Spanish champion Barcelona opened its LaLiga campaign on Saturday with an island cruise as it played almost an hour against nine men on its way to a 3-0 victory in Mallorca.

The results: Premier League: Nottingham Forest 3 (Wood 5, 45+2, Ndoye 42) bt Brentford 1 (Thiago 78-pen); Chelsea 0 drew with Crystal Palace 0; Manchester United 0 lost to Arsenal 1 (Calafiori 13)

LaLiga: Celta Vigo 0 lost to Getafe 2 (A. Liso 47, C. Uche 72).

On Saturday: LaLiga: Mallorca 0 lost to Barcelona 3 (Raphinha 7, Ferran Torres 23, Yamal 90+4); Alaves 2 (T. Martinez 36, Tenaglia 92) bt Levante (Toljan 68) 1; Valencia 1 (Lopez 57) drew with Real Sociedad (Kubo 60) 1.

The hero: Diamantakos lets out a roar after putting East Bengal ahead. DEBASISH BHADURI

East Bengal edges Bagan, enters semis

DURAND CUP

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

Emami East Bengal produced a fine display of attacking football to prevail over traditional rival Mohun Bagan Super Giant 2-1 in a quarterfinal of the 134th Durand Cup at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Sunday.

Surprise package

East Bengal will take on tournament debutant Diamond Harbour FC, which surprised Jamshedpur FC earlier in the day, in the second semifinal at the same venue on Wednesday.

East Bengal went ahead in the 38th minute when Dimitrios Diamantakos, who came in as a 17th-minute substitute for an injured Hamid Ahadad, converted a penalty.

The Greek forward scored again soon after the break to double East Bengal's in the 52nd minute.

Bagan pulled one back through Anirudh Thapa in the 68th minute but that was not enough to stop East Bengal from securing a well-deserved win.

Upset victory

Diamond Harbour sprung a big surprise by downing former ISL League Shield winner Jamshedpur FC 2-0 at the latter's home ground JRD Tata Sports Complex to continue its remarkable journey.

Sairuatkima's brace

Sairuatkima struck twice in the first half to put Diamond Harbour in control. The club from West Bengal put up a good defensive performance in the second half to thwart the Jamshedpur attacks.

The results: Quarterfinals:
At Jamshedpur: Jamshedpur FC 0 lost to Diamond Harbour FC 2 (Sairuatkima 3, 41).
At Kolkata: East Bengal 2 (Dimitrios Diamantakos 38-pen, 52) bt Mohun Bagan Super Giant 1 (Anirudh Thapa 68).

SNAPSHOTS

Healy powers Australia-A to consolation win

Alyssa Healy blazed away to an unbeaten 137 as Australia-A scored a consolatory nine-wicket win in the inconsequential third women's one-dayer against India-A in Brisbane on Sunday.

India-A had already sealed the three-match series after a two-wicket win in the second game on Friday, having also edged the opener by three wickets.

The scores: India-A 216 in 47.4 overs (Shafali 52, Yastika 42, McGrath 3/40) lost to Australia-A 222/1 in 27.5 overs (Healy 137 n.o., Wilson 59). **Toss:** India-A.

Ashwin clarifies his statement on Brevis

R. Ashwin has clarified his statement about the signing of Dewald Brevis by Chennai Super Kings, asserting that his focal point was the South African's batting performance and not the price at which he was acquired midway through IPL 2025.

A controversy erupted when Ashwin, currently in the CSK roster, hinted in his *YouTube* channel that the five-time champion was willing to pay "extra" to avail Brevis' services.

"My intent in the old video was to talk about Brevis' batting, not about his IPL signing amount. We have to understand that every player who plays in the IPL has a contract with the franchise and the tournament. The franchise and the IPL have a binding contract and if there is anything wrong, it won't be ratified," said Ashwin.

Poignant: Leander Paes with Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey and Hockey Bengal secretary Istiyak Ali during the funeral procession. ANI

Habiba triumphs as Anahat retires hurt

Second seed Habiba Hani of Egypt beat top seed Anahat Singh in the final of the $27,500 Bega Open PSA women's squash tournament in Australia on Sunday. The 20-year-old Habiba led 9-11, 11-5, 11-8, 10-4 when Anahat retired, unable to sustain her challenge owing to an ankle injury.

The 17-year-old Anahat, who has 12 titles to her credit on the PSA circuit got off to a good start, but was not able to match the athleticism and energy of Habiba as the match progressed.

It was the maiden PSA World series title for Habiba.

"It was quite tough. I tried to push through but could not. I have one more week to recover before the National championship. I am looking forward to it," said Anahat, who is the defending champion in the tournament scheduled in New Delhi from August 23.

The result (final): Habiba Hani (Egy) bt Anahat Singh 9-11, 11-5, 11-8, 10-4 (retd.).

Dr. Vece Paes laid to rest as Ganguly, Tirkey join funeral procession

Dr. Vece Paes, an Olympic hockey bronze medallist and pioneering sports medicine expert, was laid to rest in Kolkata on Sunday as former India cricket captain Sourav Ganguly and Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey joined mourners in his funeral procession.

Young players lined up on either side of the road and raised their sticks to pay their last respects while his hearse made its way into the Maidan tent.

Officials of Hockey Bengal were also present.

His son Leander was inconsolable, even as Ganguly joined some officials in comforting the tennis legend.

INBRIEF

Bayern beats Stuttgart in German Super Cup

Harry Kane and Luis Diaz scored as Bayern Munich beat Stuttgart 2-1 away on Saturday to lift the German Super Cup for a 10th time. The match, which opens the German season with the league and cup winners facing off, was held for the first time since it was renamed for football legend Franz Beckenbauer, who died in 2024.

Semenyo thankful for support in face of racism

Bournemouth forward Antoine Semenyo thanked his teammates, Liverpool's players and the football community as a whole for the "overwhelming messages of support" he received after reporting he was racially abused by a spectator at Anfield. Merseyside Police said on Saturday that a 47-year-old man from Liverpool was arrested on suspicion of a racially aggravated public order offence.

Brentford splashes club-record fee on Ouattara

Brentford signed Dango Ouattara from Bournemouth for a reported £42 million on Saturday in a deal that could free up Yoane Wissa to leave the Bees. Ouattara, 23, scored 11 goals in 88 appearances for the Cherries.

Services, Kerala clinch National water polo titles

Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) and Kerala won the men's and women's water polo crowns, respectively, at the 78th National aquatics championships, which concluded in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

The results (winners only): Diving: Men: Synchronised platform: N. Willson Singh and Indiver Sairem (SSCB) 287.40; **3m springboard:** Satish Kumar Prajapati (SSCB) 303.85; **3m synchronised springboard:** Surajit Rajbanshi and Y.Premson Meitei (SSCB) 290.19; **1m springboard:** Surajit Rajbanshi (SSCB) 298.30; **Platform:** Siddharth Pardeshi (SSCB) 316.60.

Women: 3m springboard: Shravani Suryawanshi (Mah) 186.50; **Synchronised platform:** Hrutika Shriramand Esha Waghmode (RSPB) 159.09; **Platform:** Shravani Suryawanshi (Mah) 181.45; **3m synchronised springboard:** Esha Waghmode and Hrutika Shriram (RSPB) 157.62; **1m springboard:** Ashna Chevli (Guj) and Hrutika Shriram (RSPB) 146.50.

Water polo: Men: gold: SSCB bt RSPB 11-10 via penalty shootout; **bronze:** Indian Police bt Maharashtra 11-10.

Women: gold: Kerala bt Indian Police 17-7; **bronze:** Karnataka bt Bengal 9-6.

LIVE TELECAST

Maharaja T20 KSCA: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & FanCode, 3 & 7 p.m.

Tennis: US Open, SS Select 1 (SD & HD) & JioHotstar, 8.30 p.m.

LaLiga: FanCode, 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

I tried taking more responsibility and got the results, says Prabhsimran

The wicketkeeper-batter had his best season in this year's IPL and the 25-year-old will look to make the most use of that for his future assignments

CRICKET

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Prabhsimran Singh played a key role in Punjab Kings' run to the final in the IPL this year, leading the run charts for his side. The 25-year-old opener had his best season and set a new record for the most runs by an uncapped player in the competition with 549 runs.

The opener credited head coach Ricky Ponting for his incredible run in the IPL.

"I feel most of the credit goes to Ricky Ponting. He gave me clarity.

"Ahead of the season, when a youngster has that clarity, he can focus completely on enhancing his game," said Prabhsimran, who is in Chennai with the Punjab team to take part in the Buchi Babu tournament that starts on Monday.

"This year, I felt my consistency was better. In the previous years, I would play well, but would get out for 30 or 35. I worked a lot on that this year. This time, I tried to take up more responsibility, and I got the results."

The wicketkeeper-batter also formed an effective partnership alongside Priyansh Arya and said the duo worked together ahead of the tournament to understand each other.

"Before the season, we heard everyone saying that both are young uncapped openers and questioned it. The captain and coach gave us clarity at the start of the tournament itself that we would be opening. We would train in nets and in practice games, and from there we just matched," said Prabhsimran.

Looking ahead to the next edition, the Punjab opener is hoping to build on his IPL exploits. "Every player, when he starts playing cricket, it's his dream to play for India.

"For now, let's see, I'm just waiting. I don't think a lot about all that, I'm just focusing on my game, and if I continue to do well, then hopefully god will give me an opportunity soon."

Looking ahead: Prabhsimran is hoping to channel this energy and continue the consistency. FILE PHOTO: VIJAY SONEJI

I am glad to captain Mumbai: Mhatre

Embracing responsibility: Mhatre feels the time spent with Dhoni at CSK would help him lead Mumbai. FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
CHENNAI

For someone who's bowled very little in senior cricket, it came as a surprise to watch Ayush Mhatre practise his off-spin, bowling to Sarfaraz Khan in the nets at the A.M. Jain College ground here on Sunday.

Mumbai was preparing for its opening fixture in the Buchi Babu All India cricket tournament against TNCA XI, set to begin at the Gojan-B ground on Monday.

"I had a niggle, so I didn't bowl in the England tour (India u-19 tour in June and July). But I bowl regularly," he emphasised after practice.

Despite the presence of a few senior players in the squad, the 18-year-old has been entrusted with the responsibility of leading his side in the tournament.

"I'm very glad to captain the Mumbai team. It's very special for me. I'm very lucky to captain Mumbai at such a young age!" he said.

But he isn't wearing the captaincy hat for the first time. He led the India u-19 side that toured England recently. He's been named the captain again for the u-19 tour to Australia in September.

Speaking about how captaincy has had a positive impact on his overall game, he said: "The (sense of) responsibility has improved. And the involvement in the game has been better for me now, because as a captain, you have to be alert for all the situations."

Having played for CSK last IPL season, he said he has "learned from Mahi *bhai* (M.S. Dhoni) to stay calm in any situation and make smart decisions on the field without being aggressive."

He's clear in his head when it comes to his approach to batting in multi-day cricket. "Every batter has his own strengths, and my strength is aggressive cricket. I just think about scoring runs. So automatically, if the ball comes in my range, I just hit it," he said.

Chethan stars as Blasters down Dragons in a rain-interrupted encounter

MAHARAJA TROPHY

C.K. Muralidharan
MYSURU

Bengaluru Blasters, aided by opener L.R. Chethan's 74 (46b, 3x4, 6x6), registered a three-wicket win (VJD method) over Mangalore Dragons in a rain-interrupted Maharaja Trophy match here on Sunday.

Local boy Chethan played some exquisite lofted cover drives, pulls and cuts against the Dragons bowlers.

He stitched together crucial partnerships with Rohan Patil (26), Mayank Agarwal (20) and Bhuvan N. Raj (14).

Hero of the day: Chethan slammed a quickfire 74.

Earlier, put in to bat, Dragons reached 174 in 19 overs before the heavens opened up. Lochan Gowda (49, 32b, 7x4, 2x6) and B.R. Sharath (45, 22b, 6x4, 2x6) added 90 runs for the opening wicket. S. Shivaraj remained unbeaten on 33 (15b, 2x4, 3x6).

The scores:
Mangalore Dragons 174/6 in 19 overs (Lochan Gowda 49, B.R. Sharath 45, S. Shivaraj 33 n.o., Prateek Jain 2/45, Mohsin Khan 2/26) lost to Bengaluru Blasters 175/7 in 18.3 overs (L.R. Chethan 74, M. Kranthi Kumar 2/28); *Match reduced to 19 overs per side.*

Toss: Blasters; **PoM:** Chethan.

On Saturday: Mysore Warriors 177 in 18.5 overs (S.U. Karthik 71, C.A. Karthik 37, S. Nitin 3/17, Manvanth 2/27, Yash Punja 3/32) lost to Hubli Tigers 86/3 in 8.2 overs (Prakhar Chaturvedi 45, Gautam Mishra 3/9).

Revised target: *86 in nine overs (VJD method).*

Toss: Tigers; **PoM:** Nitin.

Jamil clears air on Chhetri

Press Trust of India
BENGALURU

India head coach Khalid Jamil on Sunday cleared the air about non-inclusion of striker Sunil Chhetri from the CAFA Nations Cup national camp, saying it was just a preparatory tournament for the Asian Cup qualifying round.

However, he made it clear that Chhetri is expected to walk into the national team for the Asian Cup qualifying round against Singapore on October 9 (away) and October 14 (home). "I also want to try out a few other players," he said.

KARNATAKA ROUND-UP

Shaina bags a grand double

Shaina Manimuthu bagged a grand double of both the senior women's and U-19 girls' singles titles at the Yonex-Sunrise Karnataka State Badminton Championship in Shivamogga on Sunday.

The results : Finals: Singles: Men: Tushar Suveer bt Nicholas Raj 19-21, 21-8, 21-13; **Women:** Shaina Manimuthu bt Ashwaty Varghese 21-5, 21-9; **U-19 boys:** Harshad Shadish bt Hardik Divyansh 21-12, 21-19; **U-19 girls:** Shaina Manimuthu bt Lakshya Rajesh 21-12, 21-16.

Doubles: Men: Kushal Raj & Prakash Raj bt Aditya Diwakar & B.S. Vaibhav 21-11, 21-15; **Women:** K. Ashwini Bhat & Shikha Gautam w/o Amrutha Pramuthesh & Suhina Roy.

Champions: The winners of the Karnataka State Badminton Championship in Shivamogga SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

U-19 boys: Amith Raj Natraj & Hardik Divyansh bt Chris Baptist & A.R. Sumith 18-21, 21-15, 21-17; **U-19 girls:** Ashwaty Varghese & Lakshya Rajesh bt Ishika Baruah Kashyap & Tanika Mohan 21-14, 21-18.

Mixed doubles: Prakash Raj & Karnik Sree bt Kishal Ganapathy & Rashmi Ganesh 21-15, 21-16; **U-19:** S. Nischal & Suhina Roy bt Chris Baptist & A.S. Mounitha 27-25, 21-19.

Shadow Baby should repeat in feature event

HYDERABAD: The five-year-old mare Shadow Baby, who won well in her last start, should repeat in the upper division of the Independence Cup, the chief event of Monday's (Aug. 18) races.

1 RED RUM PLATE (1,400m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II) – 12.55 p.m. (whips not permitted): 1. Cypress (7) Kuldeep Sr. 56, 2. Lake Michigan (4) B.R. Kumar 56, 3. Suryavanshi (6) Surya Prakash 56, 4. American Affair (8) H.M. Akshay 54.5, 5. Bestie (1) Md. Ekram 54.5, 6. Certainty (3) Yash Narredu 54.5, 7. Gusto's Baby (2) Afroz K 54.5 and 8. Tootsie Darling (5) Ashad Asbar 54.5.
1. CERTAINTY,
2. TOOTSIE DARLING,
3. GUSTO'S BABY

2 DEVARAKONDA CUP (Div. II) (1,100m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 1.30: 1. Zuza (6) Ashad Asbar 60, 2. Bold Beauty (7) P. Sai K 58.5, 3. Shoolin (4) Mukesh K 58.5, 4. Star Medal (8) Abhay Singh 58.5, 5. See My Attitude (2) Surya Prakash 58, 6. Her Ladyship (3) Kuldeep Sr. 57, 7. Exclusive Luck (1) Md. Ismail 54.5, 8. Amboseli (9) H.M. Akshay 52 and 9. Politics (5) G. Naresh 51.5.
1. ZUZA, 2. BOLD BEAUTY, 3. SHOOLIN

3 INDEPENDENCE CUP (Div. II) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 2.05: 1. She Can (4) S. Shareef 61, 2. High Reward (3) R.S. Jodha 58.5, 3. Warwick (1) P. Ajeeth K 58, 4. Only My Way (6) Afroz K 57, 5. Sangreal (7) Yash Narredu 56.5, 6. Sopranos (8) Akshay K 55.5, 7. Deccan Spirit (5) Mukesh K 54 and 8. Blissful (2) Nakhat 53.
1. SANGREAL, 2. WARWICK, 3. DECCAN SPIRIT

4 FAIR HAVEN PLATE (1,400m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 2.40: 1. Walking Thunder (2) Ashad Asbar 60, 2. Star Forever (6) P. Sai K 59, 3. Emperors Charm (---), 4. Brilliant Lad (1) Yash Narredu 56.5, 5. Park Lane (4) Md. Ismail 56.5, 6. Juramento (5) Surya Prakash 54.5, 7. Ampere's Touch (3) G. Naresh 54 and 8. Shah Of Iran (7) B. Nikhil 52.
1. BRILLIANT LAD, 2. STAR FOREVER, 3. JURAMENTO

5 DEVARAKONDA CUP (Div. I) (1,100m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 3.15: 1. Bhairava (6) P. Ajeeth K 61, 2. Dontblockmyway (4) Akshay K 59.5, 3. Dashing Charm (3) Ashad Asbar 59, 4. Mark My Day (7) Nakhat 59, 5. Double Bubble (9) Kuldeep Sr. 58.5, 6. Only The Brave (1) Ajay K 57.5, 7. Mexican Wave (8) R.S. Jodha 57, 8. Peanut (5) Mukesh K 53.5 and 9. Una Paloma Blanca (2) Surya Prakash 50.
1. DONTBLOCKMYWAY, 2. DASHING CHARM, 3. PEANUT

6 ASCOT PLATE (1,200m) (Terms), 3-y-o and upward, (Cat. II) – 3.50: 1. Berrettini (10) P. Sai K 62, 2. Ragnarok (11) Santosh Raj 62, 3. Calistoga (2) Akshay K 60, 4. Espionage (9) Kuldeep Sr. 60, 5. Maverick (5) Varun 60, 6. D Minchu (3) P. Ajeeth K 58.5, 7. Pontefract (4) Likith Appu 58.5, 8. Torchbearer (1) Ashad Asbar 58, 9. Baisa (8) G. Naresh 56.5, 10. Calista Girl (7) Gaurav 56.5 and 11. Runlikethewind (6) Md. Ekram 52.
1. BERRETTINI, 2. ESPIONAGE, 3. CALISTOGA

7 INDEPENDENCE CUP (Div. I) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 4.25: 1. Kingston (5) Abhay Singh 61.5, 2. Rival (6) P. Sai K 60, 3. Romantic Grey (9) Afroz K 58.5, 4. Shadow Fax (1) Sonu K 57, 5. Mix The Magic (7) Mukesh K 56, 6. Shadow Baby (2) Akshay K 56, 7. N R I Dheera (8) Varun 53, 8. Sweet Dancer (4) H.M. Akshay 52 and 9. Windsor (3) Surya Prakash 50.
1. SHADOW BABY, 2. SHADOW FAX, 3. RIVAL

8 KARIMNAGAR PLATE (Div. II) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 5.00: 1. Inderdhanush (13) Md. Ismail 60, 2. Trust Me (10) Deepak 59.5, 3. Shooting Star (1) P. Ajeeth K 59, 4. Silver Lining (8) Sonu K 58.5, 5. Hoping Star (12) Mohit 57.5, 6. Divine Destiny (2) Surya Prakash 57, 7. Lights On (6) R.S. Jodha 56, 8. Lego (4) Ashad Asbar 54.5, 9. Golden Unicorn (7) P. Sai K 52.5, 10. Lady Jane (5) Nakhat 52.5, 11. Glimmer Of Hope (9) Kuldeep Jr. 52, 12. Battle On (3) Ajay K 51 and 13. Genie (11) Md. Ekram 51.
1. SHOOTING STAR, 2. LEGO, 3. INDERDHANUSH

Day's Best: **BRILLIANT LAD**
Jackpot: 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.
Mini Jackpot: (i) 2, 3, 4 & 5, (ii) 5, 6, 7 & 8.
Treble: (i) 1, 2 & 3, (ii) 3, 4 & 5, (iii) 6, 7 & 8.
Tanala: All races.

Pyrite claims the Nizam's Gold Cup

HYDERABAD: Trainer S. Waheed's grey filly Pyrite, piloted by A. Sandesh, snatched victory in a thrilling blanket finish from Victor Hugo, Rise And Reign and Galahad, in the Nizam's Gold Cup, the main attraction of Sunday's (Aug. 17) races. The winner is owned by Mr. Ketan S. Wakkar, Mrs. Jalpa K. Boricha & Mrs. Roshni C. Punjabi rep. Aditya Solar Solution (PF), Mr. Amit V. Menda, Mr. Chirag V. Shah, Mr. Anil V. Poduval, Mr. Rajiv Tinaikar, Mrs. Minal Pitale, Mr. Suresh Pitale & Mr. Nihar Pitale rep. Green Turf Racing LLP.

1. DONCASTER PLATE (1,100M): N R I HIGH POWER (Akshay Kumar) I, Emerald Touch (Neeraj) 2, Foxy Girl (H.M. Akshay) 3 and Shreshhtha (Mukesh K) 4. 2, 7-3/4 and 5-1/4. 1m 7.45s. ₹13 (w), 11, 13 and 17 (p). SHP: 25, THP: 35, SHW: 13 and 14, FP: 28, Q: 25, Tanala: 78. Favourite: N R I High Power.

Owners: M/s. Ravinder Reddy Male, Suchit Jayraj Shah & Prabhakar Chowdary Tripuraneni. Trainer: D. Netto.

2. GADWAL PLATE (1,800M): TAKE A BREATH (Ajay Kumar) 1, Silver Arrow (P. Sai K) 2, Federer (P. Ajeeth K) 3 and Nkalanzinzi (Ashad Asbar) 4. 10-1/2, 1/2 and 2-3/4. 1m 55. 18s. ₹17 (w), 12, 12 and 11 (p). SHP: 41, SHW: 10 and 16, FP: 93, Q: 45, Tanala: 126. Favourite: Take A Breath.

Owners: M/s. V. Avinash Reddy, V. Narendar Reddy & K. Mallikarjuna Rao. Trainer: G. Shashikanth.

3. COLONEL B. SANTOSH BABU MEMORIAL CUP (2,000M): RACING RULER (P. Sai Kumar) 1, Black Dust (Ajay K) 2, Freedom Touch (Neeraj) 3 and Dapper Look (Akshay K) 4. 3-1/2, 1 and 4-1/2. 2m 6. 76s. ₹21 (w), 10, 15 and 16 (p). SHP: 32, THP: 31, SHW: 20 and 39, FP: 170, Q: 92, Tanala: 526. Favourite: Dapper Look.

Owners: M/s. Teja Gollapudi, Bollineni Krishnaiah, Ashok Ranpise, Seshadri Reddy Pochana, Mukund Kakani, Teegala Vijender Reddy, Teegala Sumant Reddy & Harinath Reddy Teegala. Trainer: K.S.V. Prasad Raju.

4. BROWN JACK PLATE (1,100M): TAALIYAH (Deepak Singh) 1, Most Beautiful (Akshay K) 2, Bien Pensant (Surya Prakash) 3 and Noorian (Ajay K) 4. 1, 2-1/4 and 2. 1m 10. 02s. ₹99 (w), 23, 14 and 22 (p). SHP: 39, THP: 52, SHW: 54 and 19, FP: 524, Q: 197, Tanala: 1,444. Favourite: Always Special.

Owners: M/s. Md. Sultan, Narasimha Reddy Banala, Sreerama Suresh & Chalapathi Rao Parini. Trainer: M.F. Ali Khan.

NOTE: Originally Most Beautiful had won this race and Taaliyah ended second. An objection was raised by jockey Deepak Singh (Taaliyah astride) against Akshay for shifting out alarmingly and taking his ground in the last 400m. The Stewards after interviewing both jockeys decided to uphold the objection and revised the order as above.

5. TELANGANA AND ANDHRA SUB AREA CUP (1,600M): NONPARIEL (Mukesh Kumar) 1, Get Lucky (Md. Ekram) 2, Secret Saint (Trevor) 3 and Dali's Destiny (Yash Narredu) 4. 3-1/2, Head and 6-1/2. 1m 39. 22s. ₹31 (w), 12, 14 and 10 (p). SHP: 26, THP: 80, SHW: 28 and 46, FP: 208, Q: 89, Tanala: 239. Favourite: Secret Saint.

Owners: Mr. Rajendran rep. Rapar's Galloping Stars LLP, Mr. Tripuranenivenkata Aditya Chowdary & Mr. P. Ranga Raju. Trainer: D. Netto.

6. NIZAM'S GOLD CUP (GR. 2) (2,000M): PYRITE (A. Sandesh) 1, Victor Hugo (Vivek G) 2, Rise And Reign (Yash Narredu) 3 and Galahad (Trevor) 4. Head, Short Head and Head. 2m 5. 24s. ₹16 (w), 10, 22 and 10 (p). SHP: 44, THP: 27, SHW: 15 and 23, FP: 80, Q: 65, Tanala: 262. Favourite: Pyrite.

Owners: Mr. Ketan S. Wakkar, Mrs. Jalpa K. Boricha & Mrs. Roshni C. Punjabi rep. Aditya Solar Solution (PF), Mr. Amit V. Menda, Mr. Chirag V. Shah, Mr. Anil V. Poduval, Mr. Rajiv Tinaikar, Mrs. Minal Pitale, Mr. Suresh Pitale & Mr. Nihar Pitale rep. Green Turf Racing LLP. Trainer: S. Waheed.

7. KARIMNAGAR PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200M): CHERISH THE LADY (P. Sai Kumar) 1, Fashion Icon (Akshay K) 2, Swiss Girl (Md. Ismail) 3 and Sargent (H.M. Akshay) 4. Neck, 4-1/4 and 1/2. 1m 15. 60s. ₹17 (w), 15, 14 and 46 (p). SHP: 24, THP: 123, SHW: 10 and 24, FP: 43, Q: 26, Tanala: 561. Favourite: Cherish The Lady.

Owners: M/s. Teja Gollapudi, Bollineni Krishnaiah, Seshadri Reddy Pochana, Satish Kumar Reddy Poondla, Giri Prathamesh Mahadev & Ashok Ranpise. Trainer: K.S.V. Prasad Raju.

Jackpot: 70%:₹6,150 (71 tkts.), 30%: 908 (206 tkts.). Mini Jackpot: (i) 1,923 (40 tkts.), (ii) 2,899 (28 tkts.). Treble: (i) 793 (44 tkts.), (ii) 246 (204 tkts.).